entrusted to his care the holy patron of the donor be given a more prominent role in scenes showing the offering of these shrines to Christ.[67]

The Continuity of the Serbian Archbishopric and its Bishoprics

Since the ideologies of the Serbian court and the Serbian church were closely related and tightly interwoven and their continuance, accordingly, represented in similar iconographic forms, the image of history of Milutin's age would be incomplete without the figures of archbishops and bishops.[68] The fact that, in Serbia, both the founding of the sovereign kingdom and the establishment of the autocephalous church were the doing of members of the same family and that these two events took place at practically the same time, resulted in the appearance of matching portraits of both rulers and prelates or even their group portraits. In Serbian art, beginning with Mileševa (1222–1228) and Studenica (1234–1235), the unity of church and state was expressed through a particular choice and distribution of figures, in a variation of forms. In the age of king Milutin the presence of this idea is discerned in Dragutin's chapel in representations of assemblies where the participation of the archbishops gives a canonical form to the enthronement of the rulers, in Bogorodica Ljeviška where the proximity of the figures of St. Sava I (and probably Sava II) to those of the kings displays the harmony of the church and the state in matters concerning the succession of the throne and finally in Žiča where both the acting archbishop, Sava III, and king Milutin are a part of the representation of the liturgical celebration of Christmas.

Among the frescoes painted after Studenica and throughout the XIII century there are no joint portraits of rulers and Serbian prelates. The former usually appear in ktetors' compositions (Sopoćani, Voljavac, Gradac) while the latter take part in liturgical scenes painted in the altar space (Sopoćani, Holy Apostles in Peć). Arilje (1295/6) was going to be the first to make use of the model formulated in Radoslav's narthex in Studenica, although in a considerably altered and enlarged variation. There, in the cathedral of the bishops of Moravica, the north and the west wall of the naos were decorated with figures of St. Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, and, next to him, those of St. Arsenije, St. Sava II, St. Joanikije, St. Jevstatije I and the current archbishop Jevstatije II with the full, official title written out as follows: "Iev'statije arhiepiskup' v'se srp'skje zemle" (Jevstatije archbishop of all Serbian land). Although this fresco does not show all the prelates of the Serbian church who had occupied the throne of St. Sava before 1296, the representative figures of archbishops – frontally positioned, uniformly dressed and accompanied by identical – inscriptions display the continuity of the Serbian autocephalous church, from its founder to the person currently at its head.[69] The link between this representation and the tradition of the first half of the century is recognised in the unusual positioning of the figures of church prelates, directly opposite those of Nemanjid monks standing before Christ, just so that the image of St. Sava could be placed next to St. Symeon Nemanja who appears there, among other things, to introduce the highest prelates of the Serbian church to Christ. It is futile to search for elements of portraiture on the faces of Serbian church dignitaries, except in the case of the contemporary archbishop Jevstatije II, because we don't believe that an artist working at the close of the XIII century could evoke the appearance of persons who lived long before his day unless their portraits had been preserved on some older works of art. In any case, on a painting such as this one, the purpose of which was to underline the perseverance of the Serbian church and its keeping of canonical principles, that was not of primary interest nor was it intended for this painting to render the images of each and every representative of the church. Their positioning, the identical iconographic treatment of each image, the inscriptions and the disregard of distinct features were simply means of making this objective more persuasive. Apart from archbishop Jevstatije II, the frescoes of Arilje also display the images of Jevsevije ("Ev'sevije jepiskup' moraviski" – Jevsevije bishop of Moravica) the current bishop of Moravica, and his two predecessors, Gerasim and Merkurije, depicted in the narthex. The latter is shown on his death bed and not in a solemn stance. Thus, unless there were some older examples of which we know nothing today, the custom of portraying bishops in their pertaining cathedrals, with the aim of displaying the ancient origins and perseverance of those sees, was first introduced in Arilje.

Frescoes from another cathedral church dating from the age of king Milutin express the same ideas as those of Arilje. In the exonarthex of Bogorodica Ljeviška, the see of the bishops of Prizren, we see the portraits of Serbian archbishops, Arsenije, Sava II,

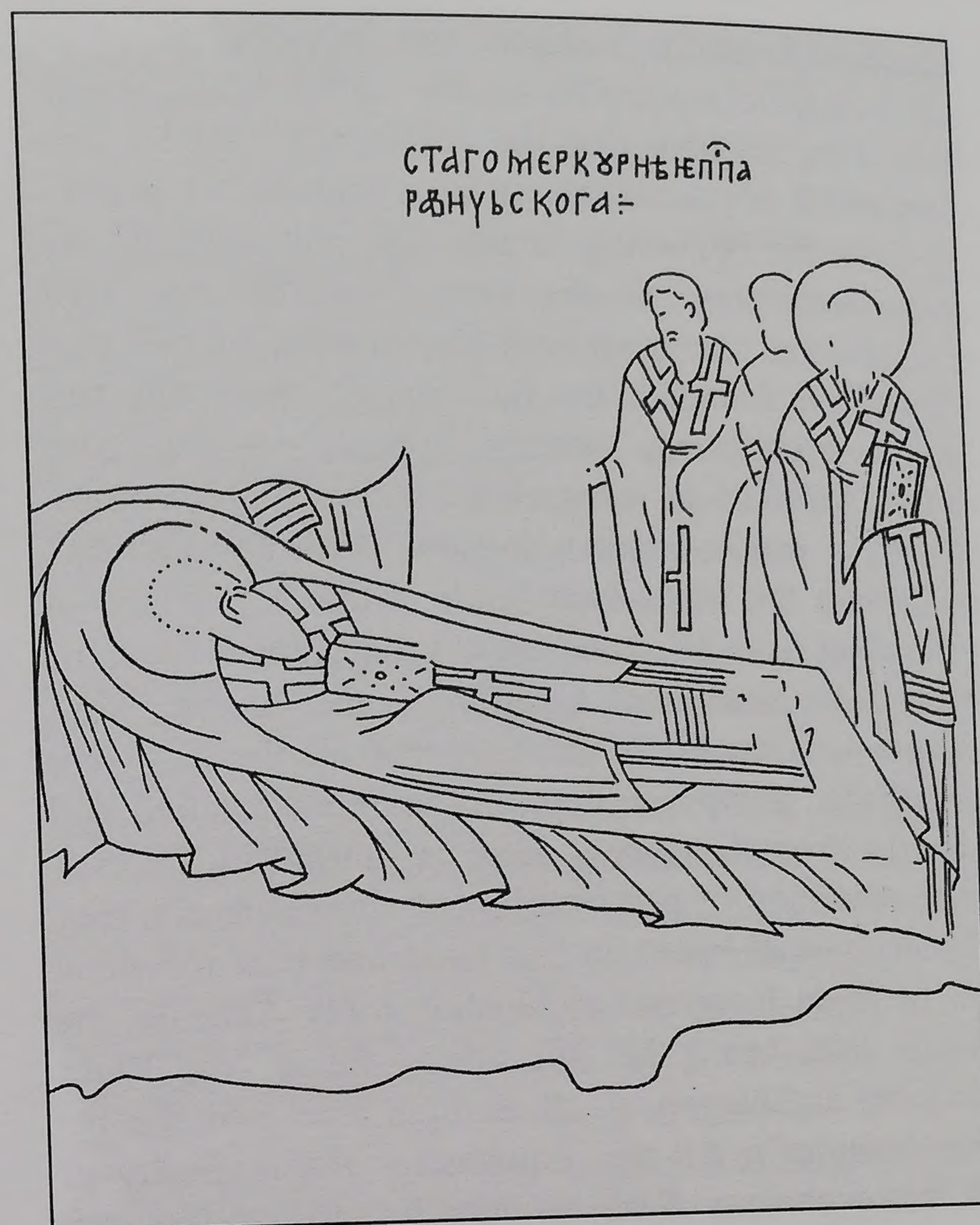
Joanikije, Jevstatije I, Jakov and Jevstatije II, in the order of their succession on the archbishop's throne. Here, too, we note that the list is not entirely complete and it is particularly striking that Sava I is missing from the beginning of this line and Sava III, the actual archbishop at the time these frescoes were being painted, from its end. Explanation of this phenomenon is found in the fact that St. Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, already appears in the inner narthex (dressed in a luxurious sakkos and accompanied by a candle-bearer), together with Symeon Nemanja and the other Nemanjids, while the image of archbishop Sava III could have been painted on some other, more prominent location in the church. Most important, however, is the fact that all the archbishops of this group are depicted in representative and therefore frontal stances, there is uniformity in their attire consisting of polystauria and an omophoria, they all carry gospel books in one hand and bear the same title of Right Reverend archbishop (only Arsenije, the first in line, bears the full title – he is "the Right Reverend archbishop of all Serbian land and the littoral Arsenije"). All this emphasises the longevity of the autocephalous Serbian church and stresses the striving of each archbishop in the task of keeping canon laws and purity of the faith. On the north part of the west wall of the exonarthex of this Prizren church we see the portraits of different bishops of Prizren, Ilarije, Amvrosije, Varlaam, Jovan, Damjan and, probably, Ilija. All the mentioned bishops are well known historical figures. From the moment when the Greek bishop was ousted from Prizren in 1219, the bishopric joined the Serbian church and its see was occupied by a line of Serbian prelates. As in Arilje, there is a certain ideological overtone to this line of bishops of Prizren, painted in representative stances and bearing the insignia of their rank and gospel books, because it stresses only the Serbian period in the history of the Prizren bishopric. In that way, it becomes a part of the broader picture of the Serbian church, represented through the images of its archbishops on the south part of the same wall in the narthex of Ljeviška.[70]

At the time of the restoration of the fresco decoration in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim, the see of the bishopric of Hum transferred there around the middle of the XIII century, figures of Serbian archbishops were painted in the narthex. We do not now exactly how many figures were painted nor do we have an idea which of the long list of bishops of Hum might have been represented there because the frescoes of the south-west corner of the narthex have suffered extensive damage. Due to spatial restrictions, it seems that the choice of personages was considerably abridged. Judging by the location of Jevstatije II in Arilje, the portion of the wall close to the entrance was probably decorated with the figure of the contemporary Serbian archbishop, Nikodim (1317–1324). However, his head and the accompanying inscription have not been preserved. This figure is dressed in the usual white sticharion, epitrachelion and omophorion, but instead of a polystaurion we see a ceremonial sakkos with short and wide sleeves, decorated with large crosses, pearls and precious stones. It is robes such as these that prove the archbishopric rank of the figure because in Serbia, beginning with the XIV century, the sakkos was reserved only for members of the highest ecclesiastical hierarchy. The figure next to this one is in an even worse state of preservation. Only a part of a white sticharion, a white phelonion with "streams" and an omophorion with crosses remain. Judging by these elements, we are dealing with another figure of a bishop. Relying again on analogies with Arilje (the figure of Jevsevije, the bishop of Moravica), could be identified as Danilo, the contemporary bishop of Hum and the future archbishop of Serbia. Finally, yet another bishop was represented in this group, but his figure is damaged to an extent which prevents us from sayings anything at all about his identity. Nevertheless, even these modest remains prove that the tradition of portraying the highest dignitaries of the Serbian church and its regional bishoprics in cathedral churches, wherever that was possible, was indeed observed in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim.[71]

All of the above mentioned portraits of Serbian prelates appear in cathedral churches located on ancient state territories. Because of the loss of many monuments in its southern regions, annexed by king Milutin after 1282, we do not know whether their walls, above all those of the church of the Virgin Tricheiroussa in Skoplje, the see of the local bishop, were also decorated with images of Serbian bishops and archbishops. We know that the Serbian church spread its jurisdiction over these regions immediately after their conquest and the somewhat younger frescoes from Lesnovo, dating from 1346, with portraits of bishops of Zletovo, indicate the possible existence of such representations in some of Milutin's endowments.

Funeral Scenes

The large number of images of bishops painted during the late XIII and early XIV century spoke of the long history of certain episcopal centres and was based on the right of high ecclesiastical dignitaries to be portrayed in their cathedral churches. According to Byzantine customs which was adopted in Serbia, bishops could also be buried in their cathedrals, usually in the narthex or in a parekklesion. As was the custom with tombs of rulers or those of venerated monks, the wall above their final resting place was decorated with the image of their last rite. Several such scenes have been preserved in Serbian art but only one dates from the age of king Milutin. The north wall of the narthex of the church of St. Achilleios in Arilje is taken up by a scene representing the death of Merkurije, a bishop of Moravica, located directly above his tomb. Although quite damaged, its basic contents are still clearly visible: the body of Merkurije, with all the signs of his episcopal rank (dressed in a white phelonion, sticharion and omophorion and a gospel book on his chest) and a halo around his head, lies in state on a high bier. One group of bishops, almost entirely damaged, stands by his head and another two figures of the same rank, with a deacon, at the foot of the bier. The inscription is partly preserved: ”(Uspenije) s(ve)tago Merkurija jep(i)s(ko)pa (Mo)ravič’skoga” (the dormition of St. Merkurije bishop of Moravica). This is obviously a commemorative scene meant to be an authentic representation of the last rites performed over the body of Merkurije. Because we know that Merkurije sat on the throne of the bishops of Moravica before Gerasim (whose portrait stands adjacent to this scene), and he in turn before Jevsevije, whose portrait as a contemporary of the fresco decoration of this church is located in the naos, next to Jevstatije II, the acting archbishop at that time, and since we are sure that he was buried in Arilje, this scene has certain documentary values. However, these values are considerably diminished by the fact that the event represented took place at least ten years before it was painted, certainly after the construction of the church. In any case, the painter relied on well known models from Byzantine art which were used time and again in manuscripts and on church walls to depict death scenes of holy bishops or laymen. Except for a single mention of his name in one textual source nothing is known of Merkurije. It could be that his efforts in the task of raising of Dragutin’s endowment

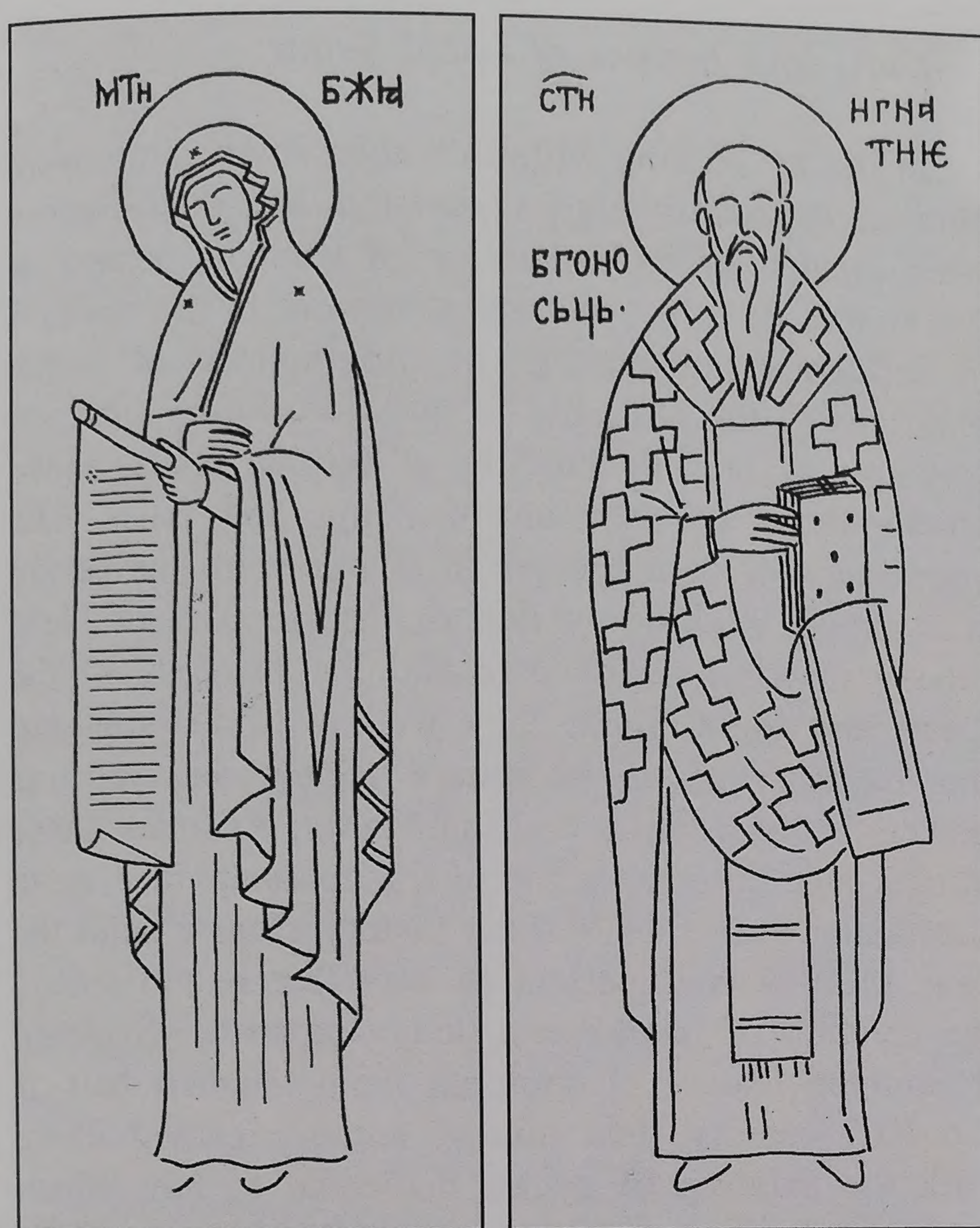


24
Arilje, *Death scene of bishop Merkurije*, 1295/1296

were by no means inconsiderable. That is why Merkurije was buried in this church with a sarcophagus raised above the tomb to mark his resting place while his death was recorded in fresco on the wall above. However, it is interesting to note that on this wall painting he is referred to as a saint, an unusual phenomenon which could speak of the early origins and short duration of his cult.[72]

Guardian saints

Not every bishop used his right to be portrayed in his cathedral church; some probably left out their images out of modesty and had portraits of their holy patrons, usually their name-sakes, intercessors before Christ or the Virgin, painted in places of honour. The case of bishop Ignjatije from the bishopric of Lipljan during whose episcopate Gračanica was raised and decorated, mentioned by king Milutin in the charter issued to this monastery, is one example of expressing patron saint veneration in such a manner. This bishop seems to have had plans of being buried in



25
Gračanica, *The Virgin Mediatrix and St. Ignatios Theophoros*, 1319–1321

an arcosolium in the south parekklesion of this church, as attested by the fresco decoration of this space: all the other arcosolia are decorated with leaved crosses while this is the only one with figures of two bishops on its vault, one of them being St. Ignatios of Antioch, the name-sake of the bishop of Lipljan. However, for reasons unknown, this bishop was never buried here. Another bishop, Teodor, was laid to rest in this spot only after 1321 and an illustration of his funeral rite is depicted therein. Bishop Ignjatije also had the figure of his holy patron painted on a prominent location in the naos, on the south pier, next to the figure of the Virgin Mediatrix and his episcopal throne. This figure is additionally set apart from those surrounding it by the treatment of its halo which bishop Ignjatije had gilded.[73]

In Staro Nagoričino, hegoumenos Venjamin relied on similar means (not counting the inscription) of recording his presence and the care he devoted to the decoration of the church. The martyr Benjamin, a saint otherwise rarely represented, appears here surely as a name-sake and patron saint of the hegoumenos of Nagoričino. He stands on the east wall of the narthex next to the figure of Christ the Saviour being addressed by the ktetor through a series of mediators. The hegoumenos also expressed special reverence for the patron of the church, St. George. One of his images painted as a fresco icon framed by a special arch in relief and bearing an inscription in Serbian is located in the south part of the naos, next to the see of hegoumenos Venjamin, certainly by his commission.[74]

A choice of otherwise rarely represented saints, their unexpected location or their specific iconographic and artistic treatment were usually signs of special reverence. Thus, in Arilje, archbishop Jevstatije II left a clear testimony of his rather pronounced attachment to this church – despite of the fact that available sources disclose nothing of the extent of his involvement in its construction and decoration. It is not impossible that he was even its second ktetor because in the ktetor's composition king Dragutin is marked, uncommonly, as the first ktetor. Jevstatije's portrait is located in the naos, he is the last in a row of Serbian archbishops, a part of a group of scenes which have nothing to do with questions of ktetorship but rather convey messages of the long and uninterrupted duration of the Serbian autocephalous church. Moreover, a half-figure of St. Eustathios is painted in the immediate midst of the ktetor's composition, above the doorway leading from the narthex to the exonarthex. This is an uncommon location for a warrior saint and an invaluable sign that archbishop Jevstatije did have some say in the choice of scenes painted in Arilje.[75]

The practice of depicting distinctly marked figures of venerated saints on prominent locations in church interiors is a custom adopted from Byzantine art and developed in Serbia from the beginning of the XIII century on. We should recall the fact that already in Studenica (1208/1209) and Žiča (around 1220) saints who were important to the ktetors were singled out by their position and artistic treatment.[76] In Žiča, in the days of king Milutin, the figures of St. Stephen the Protomartyr and St. Sabas of Jerusalem, located by the iconostasis, were repainted. Moreover, each saint had a separate parekklesion dedicated to his memory and placed respectively on the north and south side of the church, thus reflecting the location of the two figures in the naos. Both saints were holy patrons and namesakes of the first ktetors, king Stefan Prvovenčani and his brother, archbishop Sava. Because his cult was nurtured only during the brief period of activity of archbishop Sava I and had become considerably weaker in later times, the

appearance of the figure of St. Sabas of Jerusalem in Žiča should be viewed primarily as a result of a literal emulation of the older layer of frescoes and in connection with the continuity of dedication of the north parekklesion. The cult of St. Stephen, on the other hand, was constantly developed because it was tied to the holy protector of the Serbian state and its rulers.[77] It even grew stronger in the age of king Milutin, as demonstrated by this king's decision to dedicate his sepulchral church in Banjska to this particular saint. In Serbian churches, the custom of painting figures of St. Stephen close to iconostasis, established in Studenica and Žiča, was observed until the very end of the XIII century. This saint is regularly dressed in a hiton and himation and his figure is either larger than those of other saints or displays all the traits of a fresco-icon. At times, he appears in this particular spot even in church interiors decorated as late as the period around the year 1300: in Arilje, next to the figure of the Virgin with her arms stretched out in prayer, in Žiča, in Gračanica, again to the left of the iconostasis and within a row of specially chosen saints, as well as in the church of St. Nikita.[78] Another tradition established in Studenica[79] was also going to find its continuation only in the churches of king Milutin: once again, in the naos of Chilandar, St. Stephen was going to be depicted next to the king and in the act of blessing the ruler while on the east wall of the narthex of the same church the gesture of his hand was going to recommend the sovereign to Christ and the Virgin.[80]

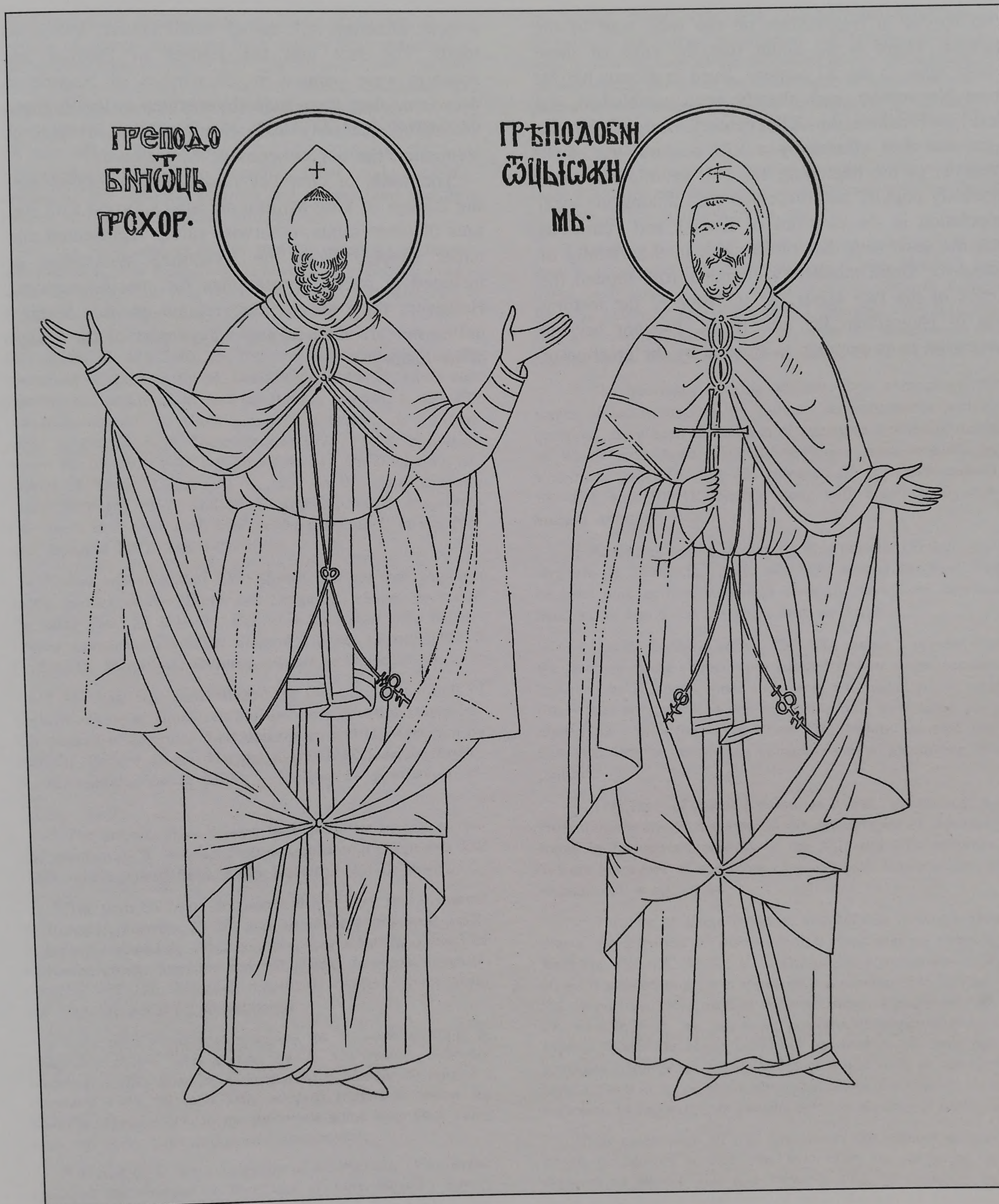
St. Stephen was depicted as the mediator between king Milutin and Christ once more in Nagoričino, in an extensive scene showing Milutin offering his endowment to Christ in which the Virgin and St. Georgios Gorgos also appear as the king's mediators before Christ.[81] Christ is marked as the Saviour and depicted in an upright stance holding a gospel book displaying the passage promising eternal life to all those who follow him, Christ, the Light of the World (John 8, 12; 12, 46–48).[82] In effect, this is a sort of Deesis with St. Benjamin, the name-sake and patron saint of the hegoumenos of Nagoričino, approaching Christ from his left side. The carefully chosen characters, probably commissioned by the ktetor and the monastery hegoumenos, render a special air to this scene. The personal interest of the Serbian society and the Nagoričino monastic community for paintings of this sort is also transparent in the fact that all the scrolls and books depicted in this composition were inscribed with texts written out in the Serbian language.

Cults and Images of Local Saints

In the art of king Milutin's age certain saints were held in especially high veneration and their images were created as an expression of personal desires of the ktetors or other persons who were in the position to influence the making of programmes of fresco paintings in the churches in question. Equal attention was also devoted to the cults of Serbian saints, above all to those of Symeon Nemanja and Sava. The appearance of their images in churches of this period was almost exclusively tied to the complex of ideas related to the holy dynasty and the ideology of the Court and the Church: they were used to point out the longevity of the sovereign secular and spiritual powers in the country and their unity. At times, these images also reflected some of the contemporary, quite substantial events of Serbian history from around the year 1300. It is important to note that in those days the erection of parekklesia dedicated to St. Symeon, a common feature of churches from the first half of the XIII century, had almost entirely ceased along with the painting of cycles dedicated to him which were usually found therein. Saint Symeon and Sava are now seen as acclaimed and venerated saints whose images grew in numbers on church walls. Apart from the already existing texts, new hagiographies and new services dedicated to them were being written while entire new churches, and no longer only parekklesia, were being raised in their honour.[83]

The southward expansion of the Serbian state resulted in the adoption of some local cults as well as those observed by the Archbishopric of Ohrid. Proof of this is found above all in Nagoričino, a church raised on the territory which became a part of the Serbian state in 1282–1284. In the prothesis, at the end of a line of bishops celebrating the Divine Liturgy we see the figures of St. Constantine Kabasilas and St. Clement of Ohrid. As opposed to St. Clement, whose cult already had a long history on the territory of the Archbishopric of Ohrid and whose portraits had already been painted in the churches of this diocese, before Nagoričino St. Constantine Kabasilas appears only in the church of St. John Kaneo in Ohrid (end of the XIII century), within the same scene as in Nagoričino, while in the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1295) the two saints appear side by side on the north wall of the naos in a representative, frontal stance.[84]

The figures of Sts. Prochor of Pčinja and Joachim of Osogovo dressed in the habits of megaloschimnoi



26
Staro Nagoričino, *Sts. Prochor of Pčinja and Joachim of Osogovo*, 1315–1317

also appear in Nagoričino, on the west wall of the narthex. There is no doubt that the cults of these saints, who, in the XI century, lived in ascesis not far from Nagoričino, had already been established and developed before the XIV century. Judging by the form and data offered by a XIII century vita of St. Prochor, in the beginning the cult of this saint was modestly popular and dispersed only among the local population in the environs of Kozjak and Pčinja, as was the case with that of Joachim in the vicinity of Osogovo. Small monastery churches rose around the tombs of the two saints. At the time of the restoration of Nagoričino the cult of St. Prochor became somewhat more popular as attested by the erection of a new, although still rather small church above his tomb. The fact that the figures of Prochor and Joachim were painted in the narthex of Nagoričino prove that they were indeed venerated in the Žegligovo region, probably as a result of the strivings of Venjamin, the hegoumenos of Nagoričino.[85]

The walls of churches raised and decorated during the age of king Milutin are also adorned with figures of other saints, otherwise rarely represented and either adopted from the Byzantine synaxarion or included in fresco programmes for specific reasons. However, they are neither related to the Serbian milieu nor are they in any way a part of the image of its history.

[1] Studeis of these portraits as a part of the overall programme of church decoration have already been published in monographs: Okunev, *Aril'e*, 237–239; Mijović, *Žiča*, 190–198; Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 58–64; Djurić, *Chilandar*, 84; Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*, 182–191; Todić, *Gračanica*, 170–178; Djurić, *Pećka patrijaršija*, 126; Todić, *Nagoričino*, 117–126. Cf. also Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 60–61, 67–74, with bibliographical information regarding other works and discourses on the historical portraits and compositions and their relation with the surrounding frescoes.

[2] The basic sources on the transfer of power in Deževo are: Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 73–75; *Georgii Pachymeris de Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis libri XIII*, rec. J. Bekkerus, I, Bonnae 1835, 353; II, 273–274 and an Anonymous from the beginning of the XIV century (*Spomenici na Makedonija*, II, 474–746), and the most important study on the agreement is still that by M. Dinić, *Odnos*, 49–52; minor corrections and additions in *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 437–439 (Lj. Maksimović); L. Mavromatis, *La fondation de l'Empire serbe. Le kralj Milutin*, Thessalonique 1978, 15–28; *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 28–29, 44–45 (Lj. Maksimović). On Dragutin's territories cf. Dinić, *Oblast*, 61–80, and on the state of queen Jelena on pages 70–73 and M. Blagojević, *Srpsko kraljevstvo i države u delu Danila II*, L'archevêque Danilo II et son époque, Beograd 1991, 142–145.

[3] More recent studies have shown that the wall paintings in the narthex of the church and Dragutin's chapel are not of the same date: Z. Zeković, *Konzervacija zidnih slika manastirskog kompleksa Djurdjevi Stupovi u Rasu*, Glasnik DKS 5 (1981), 45; Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarske insignije*, 50.

[4] All those who have studied the frescoes and portraits of Serbian rulers in Djurdjevi Stupovi have identified correctly this portrait of Dragutin (best description and interpretation by Radojčić, *Portreti*, 28 and Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarske insignije*, 50; reproduction in Millet – Frolow, *La peinture*, I, pl. 30/3).

[5] The portraits from Gradac have been the subject of special attention of R. Nikolić, *Prilozi proučavanju živopisa iz XIII i XIV veka u oblasti Rasa*, Raška baština 2 (1980), 86–88.

[6] The portraits from Dragutin's chapel were first discussed by Radojčić, *Portreti*, 27–28, and his observations were usually simply repeated by other authors; they were the subject of somewhat greater attention only of Djurić, *Istorijske kompozicije (II)*, 135–136. Although thoroughly cleaned twenty years ago, they are not even all published.

[7] The inscriptions accompanying the historical portraits in Dragutin's chapel were copied by A. Gil'ferding, *Sobranie sočinenij, t. III, Bosnija, Gercegovina i Staraja Serbija*, S.-Peterburg 1873, 97, and were adopted from that source by Radojčić, *Portreti*, 27. In the meantime some have been damaged and others have completely disappeared.

[8] According to the ivestigation of M. Purković (*Was Stefan Dečanski the Younger or the Elder of King Milutin's Sons?*, The Slavonic and European Review 29, 1951, 545–549), Stefan was born around 1275. According to this author (*Prilošci srpskoj istoriji*, GSND XIX, 1938, 244–245), the figure next to Dragutin is not that of his younger son because he was not even born at the time of the decoration of this parekklesion. In general, during the era of the Palaiologoi, in Byzantium and its cultural sphere, images of ktetors accompanied by members of their families were not rare (Velmans, *Le portrait*, 97–98). The sovereign, in case he was not the actual ktetor, was usually represented alone or in the company of his wife (Velmans, *Le portrait*, 107–108), and sometimes, as is the case with tsar Dušan in Serbia, in the company of his heir.

[9] Based on the reading offered by Hilferding, the first who made a wrong identification of this wife of king Milutin's portrayed in Dragutin's chapel was I. Ruvarac (*Zbornik Ilariona Ruvarca. Odabrani istorijski radovi*, I, Beograd 1934, 17), and, after him, also Radojčić, *Portreti*, 27, while this identification was rejected by M. Dinić, *Comes Constantinus*, ZRVI 7 (1961), 2.

[10] The marriages of king Milutin, their chronology, the names of his wives and his children, as particularly intricate questions, have been the subject of numerous works the results of which have been critically reviewed most recently in: *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 38–43, notes 80–83 (Lj. Maksimović), 137–139, note 109 (I. Djurić), along with insufficiently convincing solutions.

[11] According to the studies of M. Purković (*Prilošci srpskoj istoriji*, 244–245), Urošic was born around this year. Had he been born earlier, he would certainly have been depicted here, as he was some ten years later in Arilje.

[12] Djurić, *Deževski sabor*, 192. The author's opinion that the frescoes in the chapel were painted in two stages can not, however, be accepted. Since they were all created at the same time – and we have seen that this could only have taken place after 1282 – only the wives whom king Milutin married after that year can be taken into consideration in identifying this portrait.

[13] This form of Jelena's name, as it was "transcribed" by Hilferding, is utterly disparate in the orthography of this name found in Serbian monuments of the XIII and XIV centuries. We are not aware of any other case in which Jelena's name is written with a *iat*.

[14] Portraits of kings Dragutin and Milutin in Arilje have drawn the attention of many scholars, best text on them by Radojčić, *Portreti*, 30–32. V. J. Djurić (*Istorijske kompozicije, II*, 135) noticed that their appearance resembles that of imperial co-regents; more on that subject Grabar, *L'empereur*, 26–27, who believes that adjoining portraits of emperors always express "l'idée du règne simultané de deux ou de trois personnages". Numerous examples indicate that such an arrangement of two or three rulers always indicates the rank of their authority, in cases of both parallel rule, co-regency or regency.

[15] In cases, such as this one, where the number of portrayed personages is even, the first ruler, the sovereign, is depicted on the left side (the viewer's left); for examples on coins as the most official form of royal ideology cf. Grierson, *Catalogue*, II/1, 69–70 et passim, with numerous examples.

16 About the extent of Milutin's rule over his brother's territories cf. Dinić, *Odnos*, 54. In inscriptions and elsewhere – in Arilje in 1295/96, in the Pljevlja euchologion from 1286–1292, the nomokanon of 1294/95, the church of St. Sergius and Bacchus from 1290, on an icon from Bari – king Milutin is always mentioned first. Although scholars have accepted the opinion that Arilje was located on Dragutin's territory, owing primarily to the discourse by Dinić, *Oblast*, 78–79, there are simply no such indications in the sources. As far as the question of Dragutin raising his endowment on his brother's land is concerned, an answer has already been offered in the form of a convincing assumption that Arilje was raised during the period of Dragutin's independent rule (M. Čanak-Medić, *Iz istorije Arilja*, Saopštenja XIV, 1982, 38–41), in the same manner as Djurdjevi Stupovi which were completed later, during the period of harmonious relations between the two brothers.

17 *Vizantijski izvori*, 38, note 80 (Lj. Maksimović). M. Purković assumed that Milutin divorced Ana before 1296, but did not have any evidence to confirm such an assumption, cf. M. Purković, *Prilošci srpskoj istoriji*, 160, note 33; id., *Princeze iz kuće Nemanjića*, Vindzor 1956, 39.

18 The inscription from the church of St. Sergius and Bacchus has been published several times already, cf. G. Subotić, *Kraljica Jelena Anžujska*, 142–143; Beatillo's description of the icon from Bari has been published by V. Tomić-De Muro, *Srpske ikone u crkvi Sv. Nikole u Bariju*, Zbornik LU (1966), 113; about the icon from the Vatican cf. Tatić-Djurić, *Ikona apostola Petra i Pavla*, 9–16.

19 Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 115.

20 It is well known, for example, that Galla Placidia commissioned an entire gallery of imperial portraits, from Constantine to Theodosius II, for the decoration of the apse of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna (Grabar, *L'empereur*, 28–29), at Çavusin in Capadoccia Nikephoros Phokas is depicted with his ancestors and relatives (Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres*, I/2, 523–524, pl. 139/2, 143/2), and, according to the textual sources, there were similar portraits of Komnenoi emperors (Grabar, *L'empereur*, 29–30). The same disposition of several figures of emperors from the same dynasty has been preserved in Georgian painting from the XIII and XIV centuries (Velmans, *Le portrait*, 109–112; G. Alibegašvili, *Svetskij portret v gruzinskoj srednevekovoj monumental'noj živopisi*, Tbilisi 1979, 12–29). A similar phenomenon has been observed on the coins of several Byzantine emperors organised by F. Grierson into the Family Coinage group (Grierson, *Catalogue*, II/1, 68).

21 About this "horizontal family tree of the Nemanjids" cf. Radojčić, *Portreti*, 16–17, 20–21, 22–23, 28; Winfield, *Four Historical Compositions*, 261–263; Ćorović-Ljubinković, *Uz problem*, 77–78; Grabar, *Un pyxide en ivoire*, 131–133; Djurić, *La peinture murale serbe au XIIIe siècle*, 164–165; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 48, 57, 60, 61; Haustein, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, 193–201; Djurić, *Slika i istorija*, 129.

22 Grabar, *L'empereur*, 29; A. Grabar, *Les temoignages écrits et graphiques relatifs à trois groupes de portraits d'empereurs et de leurs familles*, Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiqutaires de France (1952–1953), 161–162; Grabar, *Une pyxide en ivoire*, 121–146; C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire (312–1453)*, New Jersey 1972, 226–227; K. Wessel, *Kaiserbild*, RBK, III (1973), 779–784; Haustein, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, 158–177; cf. also note 20.

23 About the ktetor's composition in Radoslav's narthex in Studenica cf. Radojčić, *Portreti*, 16; about that of Sopoćani V. J. Djurić, *Sopoćani*, Beograd 1991, 157; and that of Gradac R. Nikolić, *Prilozi proučavanju živopisa iz XIII i XIV veka u oblasti Rasa*, 86–88. Cf. also Ćorović-Ljubinković, *Uz problem*, 77–78.

24 The ktetor's composition from Petrova crkva has been described in detail by Ćorović-Ljubinković, *Živopis Svetoga Petra*, 44 and Mihailović, *Crkva Svetog Petra*, 90–91.

25 Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 117. On Nemanjid monks in Dragutin's chapel, briefly, with their accompanying inscriptions, Radojčić, *Portreti*, 27; Djurić, *Istorijske kompozicije (II)*, 135–136.

26 In Arilje St. Symeon is depicted as the advocate but also as the intercessor and the role-model and teacher. At around the same time Teodosije wrote the following lines: "Let us follow Symeon, the spiritual beacon, having him as the reliable guide, him who cried: Come, my children, listen to me, imbued with the fear of the Lord and love, to receive indulgence for the sins you have committed", *Srbljak*, I, Beograd 1970, 333. Much has been written about the figures of Nemanjid monks in Arilje, for example, by Okunev, *Portrety korolej ktitorov*, 82–85 and Djurić, *Slika i istorija*, 129 et passim.

27 The last to write about these personages was Djurić, *Pećka patrijaršija*, 121, 126, who also published reproductions of them, pl. 75. About the possible appearance of the original representation and its XVII century alterations cf. B. Todić, *Patrijarh Joanikije – ktitor fresaka u crkvi Sv. apostola u Peći*, Zbornik LU 16 (1980), 86–87.

28 Cf. F. Miklosich, *Monumenta serbica*, Wien 1858, 65–66, 71, 74, 78; *Svetostefanska hrisovulja*, Spomenik SKA IV (1890), 2; S. Stanojević, *Studije o srpskoj diplomatici*, Glas SKA 92 (1913), 146–148.

29 A good description of St. Sava and St. Symeon found in this church in Studenica is offered by Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*, 183–190. A somewhat different interpretation of their images is offered by S. Ćurčić, *The Nemanjić Family Tree in the Light of the Ancestral Cult in the Church of Joachim and Anna at Studenica*, ZRVI 14–15 (1973), 191–195.

30 These figures from Chilandar which were not repainted were published by Millet, *Athos*, pl. 59–61, and discussed by Radojčić, *Umetnički spomenici*, 180; Djurić, *Fresques médiévales à Chilandar*, 73–74, 77–78; Djurić, *Chilandar*, 84 and B. Todić, *Freska sv. Nikodima iz Hilandara i problem datiranja slikarstva katolikona*, Zbornik LU 21 (1985), 92–94.

31 Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski hrisovulji, akti, biografije, letopisi, tipici, pomenici, zapisi i dr.*, Spomenik SKA III (1890), 14.

[32] This observation was made quite some time ago by Gordana Babić who concluded that the choice of themes in Dragutin's chapel is close to that found in narthece (Babić, *Les chapelles*, 168–169).

[33] Representations of assemblies were identified and studied in detail by Djurić, *Istorijske kompozicije (II)*, 131–137. They are only generally similar to representations of Ecumenical councils and other assemblies presided over by the ruler (Grabar, *L'empereur*, 90–92; Walter, *L'iconographie des conciles*, 183–184), the iconography of which goes back to ancient Roman imperial art (cf. A. Alföldi, *Insignien und Tracht des Römischen Kaiser*, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Arch. Inst., Römische Abteilung 50, 1935, 36, 60, Abb. 2, 7). The akakia which the kings hold in their left hand is certainly related to the symbolism of power, because it reminded them of humility and death (cf. J. Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos, Traité des offices*, Paris 1966, 202).

[34] The Sopoćani fresco is only named precisely but not studied in greater detail: V. J. Djurić, *Sopoćani*, figs. 22–23, while the one in Arilje was the subject of several studies, the most thorough are those of Radojčić, *Portreti*, 33 and Djurić, *Istorijske kompozicije (II)*, 137–141. In greater detail on the subject of these Serbian assemblies in mediaeval painting Todić, *Portraits des saints Siméon et Sava*, 137–139.

[35] L. Mirković, *Heortologija*, Beograd 1961, 148; on this subject, inspired by the example from Sopoćani, B. Todić, *L'influence de la liturgie sur la décoration peinte du narthex de Sopoćani*, Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo, Moskva 1997, 52–53, 55.

[36] On the portrait of Vladislav, next to his mother, queen Katelina, Radojčić, *Portreti*, 27–28. On the portraits from Sopoćani Radojčić, *Portreti*, 23 and V. J. Djurić, *Sopoćani*, 28, figs. 4–5, and on those from Apollonia H. und H. Buschhausen, *Die Marienkirche von Apollonia in Albanien*, Wien 1976, 143–182, 239–241, Fig. 16–19, Taf. 101–107. In Byzantium and its cultural sphere frontal representations of rulers and members of their families are much more common, except in Georgia, where processions similar to those seen in Serbian art of the XIII century are predominant (G. Alibegašvili, *Svetskij portret v gruzinskoj srednevekovoj monumental'noj živopisi*, 20–22, 41 et passim, pls. 10, 24–26, 36, 42).

[37] About their portraits cf., apart from others, Okunev, *Portrety korolej ktitorov*, 85, pl. V; Radojčić, *Portreti*, 33–34; Todić, *Kralj Milutin sa sinom Konstantinom*, 16. On this representation as an example of heavenly investiture Babić, *O jednom vidu investiture vladara*, 158. On this problem in general cf. R. Nikolić, *Zašto se kralj Milutin kao ktitor nije slikao sa sinovima?*, Raška baština 2 (1980), 94–98.

[38] The testimonies of Georgios Pachimer and Theodoros Metochites have recently been reevaluated with great attention, taking into consideration other sources, too, related to Milutin's negotiations concerning his marriage with Simonida: *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 34–55, 77–143 (Lj. Maksimović and I. Djurić).

[39] New readings of the inscription accompanying the portraits in Mileševa have been published only recently: Dj. Trifunović, *Natpis uz portrete u manastiru Mileševi*, Književnost i jezik XXXIX (1992), 91–100; V. J. Djurić, *Srpska dinastija i Vizantija na freskama u manastiru Mileševi*, Zograf 22 (1992), 17–18, fig. 2. As the son-in-law of emperor Alexios (Komnenos Angelos) Stefan is also mentioned in other written sources and on other paintings, what's more, long after he divorced Eudokia.

[40] For the first mention of Stefan in the charter of Ratac cf. F. Miklosich, *Monumenta serbica*, 67–69; Mošin, *Povelje kralja Milutina*, 63. The question of Stefan's birth, his mother and western sources related to him was most recently reviewed by Lj. Maksimović, *Vizantijski izvori*, VI, 40–42, note 82. On Stefan's administration in Zeta and his "royal" title cf. *Istorija Crne Gore*, II/1, 60 (S. Ćirković).

[41] The bibliography on the portraits of the Nemanjids in Bogorodica Ljeviška is vast: Radojčić, *Portreti*, 34; S. Mandić, *Jedan vladarski lik u Bogorodici Ljeviškoj*, Zograf 1 (1966), 24–27; Radovanović, *Portreti Nemanjića*; Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 58–64; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 68, 259–260 (with an extensive bibliography); Todić, *Kralj Milutin sa sinom Konstantinom*, 18; drawings of all the portraits have been published in the meantime, B. Živković, *Gračanica. Les dessins des fresques*, Beograd 1991, 50–51.

[42] On Serbian history during the last decade of Milutin's reign cf. *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 462–475 (S. Ćirković).

[43] Very little is known about this son of Milutin's, cf. M. Purković, *Two Notes on Medieval Serbian History*, 547–549; I. Božić, *Dominus Rex Constantinus*, Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta XII/1 (1974), 434; Todić, *Kralj Milutin sa sinom Konstantinom*, 18–20; M. Milović-Djurić, *Konstantin – sin kralja Milutina*, Istorijski zapisi, XXXVIII/3–4 (1985), 67–75.

[44] C. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, I, Gotha 1911, 353–354; V. Tomić-De Muro, *Srpske ikone u crkvi Sv. Nikole u Bariju*, 112 (on Milutin's unpreserved altar from Bari); *Istorija Crne Gore*, II/1, 66 (S. Ćirković); *Istorija srpskog naroda*, I, 496 (S. Ćirković) (on Konstantin's administration in Zeta); I. Božić, *Dominus Rex Constantinus*, 433–440 (on coinage with Konstantin's image). This is contested by M. Milović-Djurić (cf. previous note).

[45] The damaged charter of king Milutin issued to the church of Sts. Peter and Paul was published by Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*, 597–598 (about it also Mošin, *Povelje kralja Milutina*, 66–67); on the restoration of the church during the age of king Milutin D. Nagorni, *Die Kirche Sv. Petar in Bijelo Polje (Montenegro)*, München 1978, 49–50; on the dating of the frescoes *Istorija Crne Gore*, II/1, 260 (P. Mijović) and Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 74, 265; the remains of ruler figures were described, not entirely precisely, by Ljubinković, *Crkva Svetoga Petra u Bijelom Polju*, 119, fig. 23.

[46] The fresco with the portraits on the north part of the east wall attracted the attention of numerous scholars; most recently of Todić, *Kralj Milutin sa sinom Konstantinom*, 7–22 (including all previous bibliography).

[47] Cf. Grabar, *L'empereur*, 98–100; I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976, 194–195; Todić, *Kralj Milutin sa sinom Konstantinom*, 15–16.

48 The Nemanjid family tree in Gračanica has been thoroughly studied: V. R. Petković, *"Loza Nemanjića" u starom živopisu srpskom*, Narodna starina 5 (1923), 97–100; Radojčić, *Portreti*, 38–44; V. J. Djurić, *Loza Nemanjića u starom srpskom slikarstvu*, Zbornik radova I kongresa Saveza društava istoričara umetnosti SFRJ, Ohrid 1976, 53–55; Haustein, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, 20–43, 302–210 et passim; Todić, *Gračanica*, 173–178; Todić, *Kralj Milutin sa sinom Konstantinom*, 20–21.

49 Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*, 186–190, pls. XXXI–XXXII, with bibliography (on Studenica); Millet, *Athos*, pl. 59–61 (on Chilandar). Because they were repainted, we still do not know what the representations of St. Symeon and St. Sava on the east wall of the Chilandar narthex looked like originally but it seems that they, too, were of an intercessory nature.

50 Millet – Frolow, *La peinture*, III, pl. 49/3. On these double portraits of Sava and Nemanja and their textual sources cf. Milošević, *Srbi svetitelji*, 178–186.

51 Todić, *Gračanica*, 177–178, t. XIV; B. Todić, *Reprezentativni portreti svetog Save u srednjovekovnoj umetnosti*, Sveti Sava u srpskoj istoriji i tradiciji, Beograd, 1998, 236–239.

52 Cf. note 41. On Milutin as sovereign king cf. G. Ostrogorski, *Avtokrator i samodržac. Prilog za istoriju vladalačke titulature u Vizantiji i u južnih Slovena*, Glas SKA CLXIV (1935), 150–151.

53 On the portraits of queen Simonida and king Milutin in Nagoričino cf. Radojčić, *Portreti*, 37–38; Djurić, *Tri dogadjaja*, 68–76; Velmans, *Le portrait*, 112–113; Todić, *Nagoričino*, 118–122. On the parallel use of Serbian and Greek in the newly conquered regions Djurić, *L'art des Paléologues et l'Etat serbe*, 179–191, and on the inscriptions accompanying Milutin and Simonida in Nagoričino V. J. Djurić, *Povodom knjige Staro Nagoričino Branislava Todića*, Saopštenja XXVI (1994), 196.

54 Djurić, *Tri dogadjaja*, 68–76. On Byzantine parallels for the composition from Nagoričino Todić, *Nagoričino*, 119.

55 Todić, *Nagoričino*, 121. On the Byzantine emperor as the New Constantine cf. *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild*, Darmstadt 1975, 133–145; *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, Belfast 1994, and on Milutin as the new Constantine Djurić, *Slika i istorija*, 124–125, 130–131.

56 Most thoroughly on the portraits of king Milutin and queen Simonida in Studenica Babić, *Kraljeva crkva*, 182–186; cf. also Radojčić, *Portreti*, 35–37. On the titles of king Milutin, similar to that from Studenica, cf. Mošin, *Povelje kralja Milutina*, 59–60, 65, 66, the closest being that stated in the charter of Banjska (*Svetostefanska hrisovulja*, 15–17) as well as his title from the charter and on the portrait in Gračanica, Todić, *Gračanica*, 68, 108.

57 This composition has drawn the attention of a number of authors: Radojčić, *Portreti*, 44–45; Dj. Bošković, *Deux "couronnes de vie" à Gračanica*, SK XI (1940), 63–64; Mijović, *Carska ikonografija (I)*, 104–107; Ch. Walter, *The Iconographical Sources for the Coronation of Milutin and Simonida at Gračanica*, Symposium de Gračanica, 183–200; Todić, *Gračanica*, 170–173.

58 Cf. Grabar, *L'empereur*, 112–122; J. Beckwith, *The Art of Constantinople*, London 1961, figs. 79, 80, 101, 122, 135, 151; I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, figs. 7–8, 11, 14, 46, 62, 66, 70; Ch. Walter, *The Iconographical Sources for the Coronation of Milutin and Simonida at Gračanica*, 186–198; Haustein, *Der Nemanjidenstammbaum*, 103–117; Todić, *Gračanica*, 171.

59 Cf. Constantin Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio* (ed. Gy. Moravcsik), Washington 1967, 66.

60 The as yet uncleaned frescoes were published long ago by Millet, *Athos*, pl. 79–80, and analysed in depth after the removal of the XIX century layer by Djurić, *Narthex de Chilandar*, 105–121, fig. 1–13.

61 On the iconography of this theme cf. Millet, *Recherches*, 163–169; Stefanescu, *Liturgie dans l'art*, 504–506; Orlova, *"Čto Ti prinesem, Hriste"*, 127–140; Hamann-Mac Lean, *Grundlegung*, 189–193; Djurić, *Portrety*, 244–255. About the fresco from Žiča and the portrait of king Milutin cf. Petković, *Spasova crkva u Žiči*, 79; Radojčić, *Portreti*, 34–35; Mijović, *Žiča*, 190–196; Djurić, *Portrety*, 247–248; Velmans, *Le portrait*, 120; N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting*, Leiden 1986, 125. The inscriptions accompanying king Milutin and archbishop Sava III are published in Lj. Kovačević, *Beleške i natpisi*, GSUD LVI (1884), 360 and *SSZN*, III, 75–76. On the fresco from Mateič N. Okunjev, *Gradja za istoriju srpske umetnosti, 2. Crkva Svete Bogorodice – Mateič*, GSND VII–VIII (1929–1930), 99; Djurić, *Portrety*, 248–249. On Christmas processions in Constantinople M. Αχειμάστου-Ποταμιάνου, *Η ερμινεία μίας τοιχογραφίας στη Μονή της Βλαχέρνας κοντά στην Άρτα*, ΔΧΑΕ 14 (1985–1986), 301–305.

62 Moreover, in the biography of king Milutin Danilo II explicitly writes about his restoration of churches: "And in his fatherland he raised many holy monasteries from the ground and invested himself with the glory that, having been renewed by the Holy Spirit, he restored the ancient endowments of his fathers and forefathers and did even more of what is pleasing to the Lord than the root from which he stemmed", Danilo II, *Die Königsbiographien*, 180–181.

63 S. Mandić, *Drevnik*, Beograd 1975, 146–154.

64 The iconography of the portraits from Žiča was studied by Radojčić, *Portreti*, 35; Mijović, *Žiča*, 196–197; S. Mandić, *Drevnik*, 147–148 et passim; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 260–261 (including bibliography); P. Ivić – V. J. Djurić – S. Ćirković, *Esfigmenska povelja despota Djurdja*, Beograd 1989, 40, figs. 22–25.

65 G. Muir-Mackenzie and A. P. Irby saw and described the portraits and copied the accompanying inscriptions, *Putovanje po slovenskim zemljama Turske u Evropi*, Beograd 1868, 232. The same also applies to A. Gil'ferding, *Sobranie sočinenij, t. III. Bosnija, Gercegovina i Staraja Serbija*, 96–97.

66 Cf. note 30. The fact that a portrait of Nemanja did exist in the old church is attested by Domentijan (*Životi svetoga Save i svetoga Simeona*, Beograd 1938, 87, 293, 294) and Teodosije (*Žitije svetog Save*, Beograd 1984, 73). Although there is no such information about Sava's portrait, he was probably depicted next to his father. On the layer of frescoes visible today they are marked as "the first Serbian Archbishop and ktetor of this holy family" (Sava) and "the hosios Symeon the myrroblytos and ktetor" (Symeon Nemanja), probably in the role of advocates before Christ of the new ktetor, Milutin.

67 The ktetor's composition in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim has attracted the attention of several scholars: A. Solovjev, *Les emblèmes de Byzance et les Slaves*, SK VII (1935), 138; Kovačević, *Srednjovekovna nošnja*, 28–29; G. Millet, *Etudes sur les églises de Rascie*, L'art byzantin chez les Slaves. Les Balkans, I, Paris 1930, 150; Ljubinković, *Crkva Svetog Petra u Bijelom Polju*, 115–119; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 74, 265; cf. also our note 45. The iconography of ktetors' portraits similar to that seen in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul is studied by Grabar, *L'empereur*, 54–57, 131–135; cf. also H. and H. Buschhausen, *Die Marienkirche von Apollonia*, Taf. 101–107; K. Valter, *Značenje portreta Danila II kao ktitora u Bogorodičinoj crkvi u Peći*, L'archevêque Danilo II et son époque, 357–358.

68 Babić, *Nizovi portreta*, 319–340. The author took into consideration numerous sources (pp. 335–339) and concluded that the origins of the representation showing a procession of bishops of a given church or bishopric, thus expressing their continuity, are Byzantine while similar examples displaying the unbroken continuity of papal authority and certain ecclesiastical centres exist also in the art of the West.

69 Okunev, *Aril'e*, 248, 251–252; M. Purković, *Srpski episkopi i mitropoliti srednjega veka*, Hrišćansko delo III/4–6 (1937), 29–31; Babić, *Nizovi portreta*, 322–323; Janković, *Episkopije i mitropolije*, 157.

70 Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 43, 66; Babić, *Nizovi portreta*, 324–328; drawings of their images are published by B. Živković, *Bogorodica Ljeviška, Les dessins des fresques*, 78–79; about them cf. Janković, *Episkopije i mitropolije*, 143–144.

71 The frescoes including the portraits of Serbian bishops were described in detail by Ljubinković, *Crkva Svetoga Petra u Bijelom Polju*, 115–119; they were identified and explained by Babić, *Nizovi portreta*, 328–329 and D. Nagorni, *Die Kirche Sv. Petar in Bijelo Polje*, Abb. 383.

72 Merkurije is mentioned only in the Pljevlja euchologion (Lj. Stojanović, *"Trebnik" manastira Sv. Trojice kod Pljevalja*, Spomenik SKA LVI, 1922, 25) as the predecessor of Gerasim. On Merkurije cf. also Babić, *Nizovi portreta*, 323–324 and Janković, *Episkopije i mitropolije*, 157, 182; on his tomb M. Čanak-Medić, *Sveti Ahilije u Arilju*, Beograd 1982, 8; on his funeral scene Okunev, *Aril'e*, 251–252, pl. XII/4; Djurić, *Istorijske kompozicije (III)*, 107.

73 In greater detail on this subject in Todić, *Gračanica*, 70–71 (on the merits of bishop Ignjatije for the construction and decoration of Gračanica), 168–169 (on the decoration of the arcosolium and the image of St. Ignatios), fig. 109 (the representation of St. Ignatios Theophoros in the arcosolium).

74 More on the subject Todić, *Nagoričino*, 122–123, figs. 8, 14.

75 The image of St. Eustathios is published by Millet – Frolow, *La peinture*, II, pl. 90/4.

76 Cf. Djurić, *La peinture serbe au XIIIe siècle*, 151–153; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 43; V. J. Djurić, *Sveti Sava i slikarstvo njegovog doba*, Sava Nemanjić – saint Sava. Histoire et tradition, Beograd 1979, 247–252; Djordjević, *O fresko-ikonama*, 90–91.

77 The first study dedicated to the representations of St. Stephen in Serbian art is that by Ćorović-Ljubinković, *Odraz kulta sv. Stefana*, 45–46, and a much more thorough one by D. Vojvodić, *Prilog poznavanju ikonografije i kulta sv. Stefana u Vizantiji i Srbiji*, Mural Painting of Monastery of Dečani. Material and Studies, Belgrade 1995, 537–563.

78 On these representations of St. Stephen Okunev, *Aril'e*, 237; Millet – Frolow, *La peinture*, III, pl. 37; Ćorović-Ljubinković, *Odraz kulta sv. Stefana*, 53–54; Mijović, *Žiča*, 160–163; Babić, *Živopisani ukras*, 25–27; Todić, *Gračanica*, 127–128.

79 A figure of St. Stephen was painted in 1208/1209 among the personages whose images decorated the entrance to Studenica monastery (probably close to Symeon Nemanja): *Blago manastira Studenice*, Beograd 1988, fig. 127, printed in reverse and identified as an archangel. This identification is corrected by D. Vojvodić, *Prilog poznavanju ikonografije i kulta sv. Stefana*, 553 and note 138.

80 Djurić, *Fresques médiévales à Chilandar*, 73–74; Djurić, *Narthex de Chilandar*, 106, fig. 10.

81 The entire composition or just some of its parts were the object of interest of numerous scholars who wrote extensively on this subject: Djurić, *Tri dogadjaja*, 68–76; Babić, *Živopisani ukras*, 31; Kisas, *Solun*, 38–39; Todić, *Nagoričino*, 118–122.

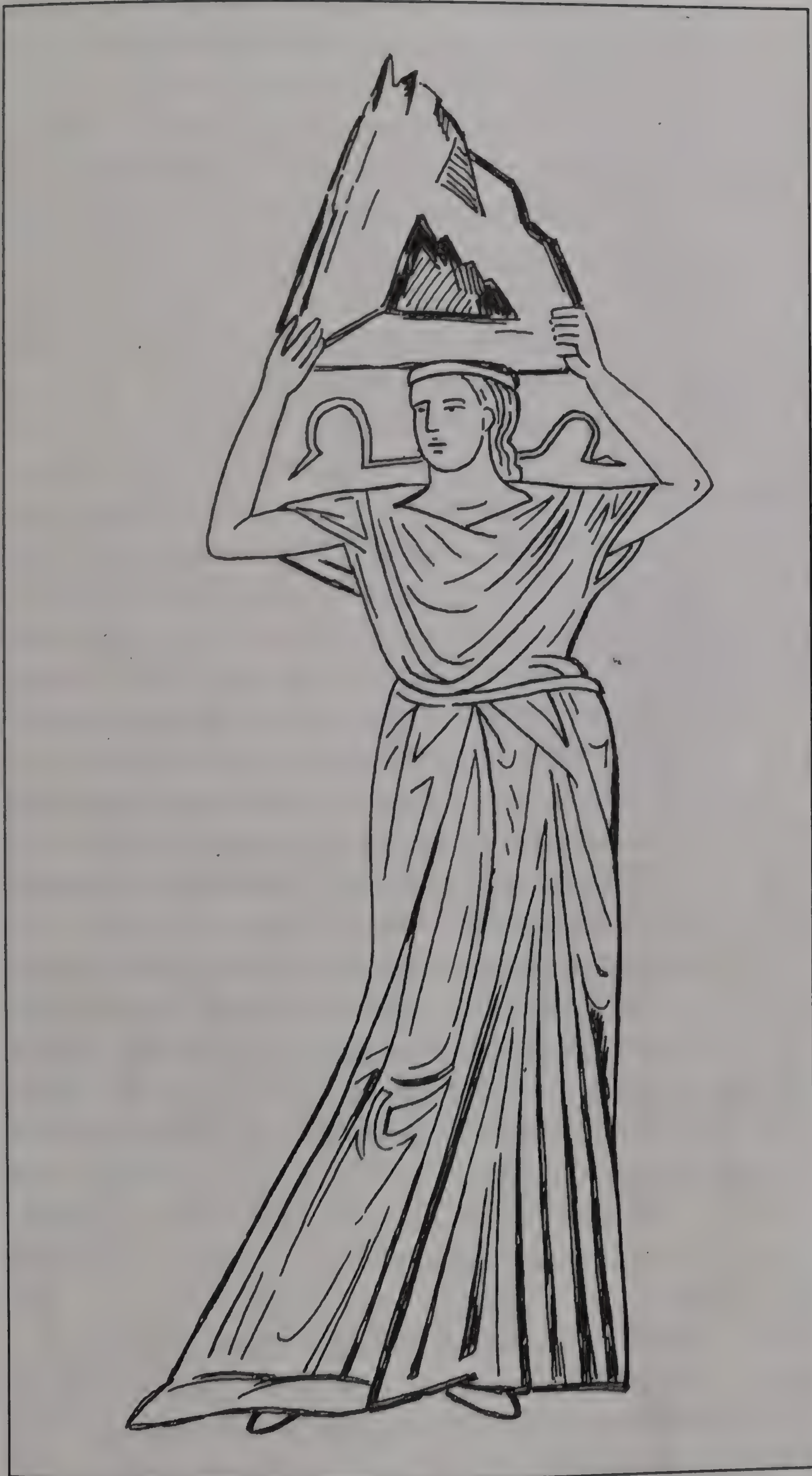
82 St. Georgios Gorgos was depicted quite seldom – except for Nagoričino, we find him also in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos (around 1320) and the Holy Archangels in Kastoria (1359–1360), endowments of Serbian ktetors, so that it is possible that his cult was widespread among the Serbs and especially venerated by king Milutin. This is also attested by the history of the monastery of St. Georgios Gorgos in Skoplje, provided for by Nemanja and renovated by king Milutin (*Spo-menici na Makedonija*, I, 93–247). On this type of St. Georgios and his cult cf. Dj. Bošković, *Problem manastira Sv. Djordja-Gorga na Seravi*, Starinar V–VI (1954–1955), 73–82; Τσιτουρίδου, *Ἅγιος Νικόλαος Ορφανός*, 41–42; Kisas, *Solun*, 35–39. Above the figures of Milutin and Simonida in Gračanica, on the east wall of the narthex, Christ the Terrible Judge holds an open gospel book with the same text as in Nagoričino (Todić, *Gračanica*, 164, fig. 98); slightly earlier, this text was also inscribed on the open book in the hands of Christ appearing in the ktetor's composition in Ras, S. Mandić, *Drevnik*, 44–45.

[83] On literary texts written in honour of Sts. Symeon and Sava in those days cf. D. Bogdanović, *Istorija stare srpske književnosti*, 169–175. The church dedicated to St. Sava in Lizica was raised by archbishop Nikodim (Arhiepiskop Danilo, *Životi*, 286).

[84] On the adoption of cults nurtured by the archbishopric of Ohrid Djurić, *L'art des Paléologues et l'Etat serbe*, 187–188; Djurić, *Byzantinische Fresken*, 66; on the images of St. Clement and St. Constantine Kabasilas in Nagoričino, Todić, *Nagoričino*, 126; C. Grozdanov, *Pojava i prodor portreta Klimenta Ohridskog u srednjovekovnoj umetnosti*, Zbornik LU 3, 1967, 49–64; Grozdanov, *Portreti*, 38–55. It is assumed that images of St. Clement of Ohrid appeared also in Mušutište and Kraljeva crkva, which can not be accepted unconditionally.

[85] Frescoes with the images of Prochor of Pčinja and Joachim of Osogovo are explained by Grozdanov, *Portreti*, 159–180 and Todić, *Nagoričino*, 25, 118.

THE IMAGE OF SACRED HISTORY



There is a pretty clear connection between XIII century painting and the tradition of the previous century, in programmes as well as in the domain of subject matter and iconography. Those solutions, ready made or somewhat reworked, were the heritage which the leading painters working around the middle of the XIII century passed on to the next generation of artists who carried out the great transformations in the art of the transition period around the year 1300. Painters working in the 1280's in Constantinople (St. Euphemia), Serbia (Gradac) or the provinces of Macedonia and Greece (Manastir near Prilep, St. John Kaneo in Ohrid, the monuments in Epirus, on the Aegean islands and on Peloponnesos), were still closely related to the art of the previous decades, although, at times, signs of a new art appeared even in their work, displayed through the introduction of rarely represented subjects or their different iconographic treatment. In several churches decorated towards the very end of the XIII century (St. Demetrios in Mistra, the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid or the Protaton on Mount Athos), the experience of earlier times was transformed into a new, different expression, fresh and appealing in the visual sense and with all the characteristics of an accomplished programmatic and iconographic whole. New themes appear in it, strongly in inbued with poetic and liturgical influence. Already during the following decades, in the churches of Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Veria, Mount Athos and Serbia, it re-ceived its final classicist shape, with themes organised into distinct and discernible cycles. At the same time, this was one of the last great epochs of Byzantine art, open to new subjects and shapes and thus extremely creative.

Fresco Programmes

Serbian monuments decorated at the close of the XIII century hardly disclose anything of that new spirit, on the one hand because their frescoes are poorly preserved and on the other because of the small dimensions and the atypical architectural forms of these churches with specific programmes of decoration. Hence, the entire vault of Dragutin's modest chapel was reserved for representations of Serbian state assemblies while the bottom zone was signed over to the ktetor, his family and the reigning monarch, Milutin, with his wife and their ancestors. Thus, not enough free space remained for figures of saints or scenes: there is only one – the Holy Trinity – and even this one could in fact be associated with the assemblies and the royal portraits.[1] It seems that the programme of the third layer of frescoes in Petrova crkva, partly preserved as it is, owes its formulation to the presence of certain scenes on the older layer of wall paintings dating from XII century. Thus, figures of prophets and angels appear below Christ Pantokrator in the dome, a feature typical of XI–XII century art, while the upper zones of the naos are reserved strictly for representations of the Feasts. Apart from the old fashioned ktetor's composition, the lowest zone contains figures of holy monks, martyrs and doctors as well as a figure of St. John the Merciful, located above what may once have been the episcopal throne.[2]

The well preserved frescoes of Arilje (1295/1296) indicate that in Serbia, at the close of the XIII century, the standard programe was expanded with new subjects and solutions which were soon to become predominant in mural painting.[3] In the altar, beside the standing figures of the bishops, we see the Communion of the Apostles, the Celebration of Holy Liturgy and several Feasts. The prothesis and the diaconicon served also as parekklesia with dedications of their own so that the one on the south has a well preserved cycle of St. Nicholas. The mixture of old and new elements is best represented in the naos. Figures of Old Testament prophets are painted between the windows in the drum of the dome but it is interesting to note that this group is reserved exclusively for the high priests. Generally speaking, figures of prophets assumed an important role in the churches of Milutin's era because they appear in the proximity of the altar, or within the sanctuary, as archetypes of New Testament ecclesiastics. They were also assigned a prominent role in announcing the coming of Christ, so that, at times, they hold objects which symbolise the events to come. In Arilje, the so-called minor prophets were transferred to the lower zone of the drum, reduced only to half-figures, with the usual inscribed scrolls in their hands. As in other Serbian XIII century monuments, the ktetor's inscription is written out around the perimeter of the base of the dome. Apart from the date of painting of the frescoes, it also offers testimony that the Arilje church was decorated in the days of king Milutin and owing to the care of king Dragutin. Further down, below the pendentives decorated with images of the evangelists, there were scenes of the Feasts and Passion of Christ, along with two of the most significant scenes from the cycle of the Virgin, her Birth and Presentation in the Temple. Adhering to old customs, figures of prophets appear on the intrados of the arches beneath the dome and they are often related to the surrounding evangelical scenes. On the other hand, the location of warrior saints in the north choir represents a break with that tradition. In a certain way, the fresco programmes of corresponding choirs in Bogdašići and Gradac, from around 1275, had already paved the way for the emergence of this arrangement in the Serbian milieu. Since the entire bottom zone of the west bay of Arilje is filled with personages from Serbian history, some of the saints usually represented in this spot were transferred to the south choir where they were placed next to the figures of St. John Chrysostomos and the Virgin, painted by the episcopal throne. In the narthex, however, apart from representations of the ktetor and his family, the current ruler and bishops of Moravica, we note also the presence of other subjects commonly seen in Serbian churches of the XIII century – above all in Sopoćani. Those are the Ecumenical and one local church council as well as the Tree of Jesse, with the addition of Abraham's Sacrifice and other themes related to the entrance to the temple.

We can say with certainty that, among the churches whose wall paintings were restored through the endeavours of king Milutin, there are two in which the new frescoes, for the most part, repeat the older programmes because the choice and distribution of subjects is quite uncommon for the period around the year 1300. What's more, some of the paintings dating from 1220–1221 are still visible in the choirs and other parts of the church in Žiča – indicating that only the very badly damaged frescoes were actually repainted at the beginning of the XIV century.[4] As in Arilje, the frescoes in the calotte of the apse of Žiča have not been preserved so that their programme remains unknown. Half-figures of church fathers in

the form of fresco-icons and figures of bishops celebrating the Holy Liturgy with angel-deacons accompanying them have remained in the lower parts. There were no scenes on the walls of the altar space but only single figures of bishops, two stylites by the apse and Old Testament high priests near the iconostasis. The subjects found in the space beneath the dome were certainly repeated from the older layer as, probably, were those of the dome with traces of the Ascension still visible. A rare choice of scenes appears below the pendentives: the Annunciation, Annunciation to Zachary, Last Supper, Mission of the Apostles (not preserved), Incredulity of Thomas and the Pentecost, as well as the figures of prophets which could not fit into the dome because of the Ascension. The rest of the Great Feasts were distributed on the vaults of the choirs (the Transfiguration is partly preserved) and in the west part of the church with a damaged Entry into Jerusalem and a well preserved Dormition of the Virgin still visible. Some of the frescoes around the iconostasis have also been preserved – Christ, the Virgin, St. George and St. Demetrios, St. Stephen and St. Sabas the Sanctified as well as the Virgin of Passion on the south-west pilaster. The west bay of the church was decorated with figures of saints which are more-less regularly found in that space: martyrs, warriors, doctors, monks, poets, and a Synaxis of the Archangels by the entrance. The parekklesia flanking the west end of the church are dedicated to St. Stephen and St. Sabas the Sanctified and were accordingly decorated with fresco cycles dedicated to the two saints as well as single figures of church prelates, martyrs and monks. A Crucifixion has survived in the south chapel while scenes from the life of the Virgin have been destroyed in that on the opposite side. The spacious narthex of Žiča was also covered with frescoes at the beginning of the XIV century; a narrative Baptism of Christ in the south-east corner is no longer visible, only modest traces of the Tree of Jesse remain. Finally, in the entrance porch we find, once again, an unusual choice of scenes: apostles Peter and Paul on the arch, the illustration of the parable "Be ye as children", the Forty Martyrs on the lake, the Christmas hymn, portraits of kings Stefan Prvovenčani and Radoslav as well as their charters issued to the monastery of Žiča written out on the side walls.

The incompletely preserved frescoes on the vault and the west wall of the west bay of the Holy Apostles in Peć, partly repainted in the XVII century, probably repeated those of the older cycle, dating from the second half of the XIII century, based on Passion lections. Because this space was initially formed as a narthex, the distribution of scenes of Christ's Passion in it was not an uncommon thing at all. However, in Palaiologan art, this cycle was transferred to the naos, along with other cycles related to the gospels and liturgy, while the narthex was dominated by images based on poetic works tied to the feasts of Nativity and Resurrection and the services which preceded them. Therefore, scenes of Christ's Passion in the west bay of the church in Peć seem pretty archaic in the art of king Milutin's age. The large fresco-icons of the Virgin and St. Nicholas on the west wall are presumably related to the dedications of the former lateral parekklesia.[5] On the other hand, although the figures of St. Constantine and Helena holding a cross between them kept their place on the west wall, due to a lack of space they were raised above the entrance and reduced only to half-figures. The group of Nemanjid monks located in the bottom zone of frescoes on the south wall is the last example of these figures being painted in a single line, one by the other.

The new choice and distribution of subjects were also adopted in the decoration of churches of small dimensions and simple spatial disposition. Judging by the very modest number of preserved frescoes in the church of the Virgin Hodegetria in Mušutište, we can only conclude that figures of the holy fathers of the church appeared in the altar space and those of holy women, doctors and warriors in the west part of the church.[6] The still visible original frescoes from the church of St. Prochor of Pčinja show that, as usual, warriors were painted on the north wall of the naos, the Celebration of Holy Liturgy in the apse and an angel next to the iconostasis, indicating the initial dedication of the church. It seems that the more recent layer of frescoes dating from 1488/9 repeated literally the original early XIV century cycles of the Great Feasts, Passion and Miracles of Christ. This means that the small church of St. Prochor of Pčinja must have had quite an extensive programme.[7] The original frescoes of the church of the Virgin in Sušica near Skoplje, single-naved and without a dome, are somewhat better preserved and they indicate that their programme was simple: the Virgin of Signs is located in the apse and below her is the Celebration of Holy Liturgy, with figures of church fathers spreading over to the altar walls as well; the Great Feasts were located on the vault and the upper parts of the walls while the lower zones were taken up by an extensive cycle dedicated to the Virgin. Standing figures appeared in the lowest zone, distributed according to a system devised in the early XIV century – holy bishops were

painted in the altar, warriors on the side walls of the naos and holy healers together with Constantine and Helena on the west wall.[8] The novelty of Sušica has to do with the fact that the cycle dedicated to the patron saint of the church entered the naos, spreading all the way to the apse. There is also a sporadic appearance of medallions filled with half-figures of saints and connected by floral decoration. Seen already in earlier Byzantine art, such strings of medallions emerge again in the first decades of the XIV century, for example, in the church of the Chora in Constantinople. Practically the only surviving fragments of the entire decoration of Milutin's largest church, St. Stephen in Banjska, are medallions with half-figures of saints, mutually connected by a band forming the figure eight, located on the intrados of an arch on the west side of the space beneath the dome.[9] The fresco decoration of the Annunciation church in Chilandar also reached us in an incomplete state of preservation which makes it difficult to reconstruct its initial contents. The programme of the altar space is easiest to perceive: apart from the Celebration of Holy Liturgy, we see here a large number of half-figures and frontally positioned standing figures of church fathers, two angels on the arch in front of the apse (similar to the Chilandar katholikon) and an Ascension on the vault above the altar bay. The choice of frescoes surrounding the iconostasis is very interesting. We see the figures of apostles Peter and Paul beneath an Annunciation scene and that of St. Demetrios above it. John the Prodromos and St. Theodore of Stoudios appear on the walls. The bottom zone of the naos is preserved to a measure which just allows us to discern the presence of figures of holy monks, anchorites and poets, as well as an absence of other personages usually painted in this space.[10]

Following the first monuments decorated in the new fashion, in which the new subjects appeared only sporadically, new ideas emerged in full glow between 1309 and 1313 in Bogorodica Ljeviška and introduced great conceptual changes to the programmes of Serbian churches. Even the standard subjects in the altar and the naos, where changes were usually more scarce and more carefully performed, now received many new forms. Painters put in great efforts and knowledge, both personal and that based on experiences of their predecessors and contemporaries, in order to unfold an extensive programme on the walls of this Prizren church.[11] They decorated the apse with a solitary figure of the Virgin and placed below her the central part of the Celebration of Holy Liturgy. They transferred the subjects characteristic of apsidal decoration – angels bearing spheres and liturgical objects, the Communion of the Apostles, church fathers with unfolded scrolls and candle bearing deacons – into the deep altar space. The diaconicon apse was filled with a half-figure of John the Prodromos, that of the prothesis with an image of Jesus Christ, while the upper parts of the altar were reserved for the Ascension and parts of liturgical cycles dedicated to the Passion, miracles and resurrection appearances of Christ. Alongside the scenes of the Great Feasts, all these cycles extended into the naos. The five domes are decorated with half-figures of Christ and below them those of angels, prophets and the Old Testament righteous. The evangelists on the pendentives beneath the central dome are deeply engrossed in the writing of their texts and inspired by Divine Wisdom, represented in the guise of an angel. The piers in the naos are covered with numerous images of Christ and the Virgin, at times with very interesting epithets, as well as with figures of holy women, doctors, martyrs. The passage leading into the narthex is taken up by the apostles Peter and Paul with Christ Emmanuel blessing them from above. The wide aisles were also decorated with frescoes and the better preserved ones in the south aisle show that, originally, Bogorodica Ljeviška must have been decorated with an exceptionally large number of scenes. That part of the church formed a separate parekklesion – just as the one on the north must have had its own patron saint, too. Therefore, it was decorated in an appropriate manner, especially its altar space: the Virgin of Signs was placed in the top register of the apse, the Celebration of Holy Liturgy below it, while the bay preceding the altar was filled with scenes from the cycle of St. Nicholas. Further west, the vaults were covered with representations of Ecumenical Councils and single figures of saints. Of the decoration of the north aisle only the figures of the lowest zone remain today. Those of holy monks are predominant among them while figures of warriors, holy women or the Virgin with Christ are not as numerous. The entire narthex is covered with portraits of the Nemanjids so that some of the themes usually found in this space (Ecumenical Councils) have been transferred to the south aisle or the open exonarthex. There we find the Last Judgement with many details, an equally extensive Baptism of Christ and themes related to the celebration of the Virgin: "The Prophets from Above", Damascene's Kanon of the Dormition and the Tree of Jesse. The bottom zone is reserved for images of Serbian archbishops and local bishops of Prizren. Personifications of the Old and the New Church at the entrance consti-

tute a prologue to this complex programme, never before seen in ancient Serbian or even Byzantine art. It continues on the floor above the narthex with numerous images of Christ, the Virgin, angels, martyrs, stylites and illustrations of didactic stories adopted from literary works. The programmes of the parekklesia of St. Demetrios and St. George create the true impression of small-scale churches, complete with eucharistic themes, cycles of their holy patrons and the figures of these saints above the entrances as well as a number of figures of other saints on their walls.

Such a number of subjects, distributed with utmost care and imbued with a sophisticated iconography, is a conspicuous manifestation of the new art which was gaining in predominance in both Byzantium and Serbia at the beginning of the XIV century. After Bogorodica Ljeviška, it continued to spread and grow ever richer in iconography in the other endowments of king Milutin. The frescoes of the church of St. George in Staro Nagoričino, painted between 1315 and 1317, offer the same narrative and complex image of Christian history based on liturgical rites and theological writings. Perfect order, systematic exposition and fine blending between subjects grace a large number of Nagoričino frescoes.[12] The importance and mystique of the altar space is underlined not only by the large number of images of holy bishops but also by those of the Virgin with Christ and the angels, the Communion of the Apostles and Celebration of Holy Liturgy as well as the opening and closing scenes of liturgical cycles from the naos. The image of heaven is conveyed by Christ Pantokrator supported by angles and the Celestial Liturgy in the calotte of the dome, the prophets in the drum and the evangelists inspired by personifications of Divine Wisdom on the pendentives. Apart from images of Old Testament prophets, high priests and righteous men, the naos also contains New Testament cycles of the Great Feasts, Christ's Miracles and Parables, Resurrection Appearances and Passion. As opposed to these, the cycle of the patron saint, St. George, was restricted only to the naos, another novelty of early XIV century art. The lowest zone is filled with figures of apostles, holy warriors and other martyrs, while the space surrounding the iconostasis with its fresco icons of the Virgin and St. George shows a specific choice of subjects tied to the Virgin, Christ, the archangels, St. John the Prodromos and St. Nicholas, the Annunciation and Old Testament prophets who heralded the coming of Christ into this world. The programmes of the small corner domes differ from those of Bogorodica Ljeviška: the two eastern domes are filled with half-figures of the four evangelists and figures of the holy fathers of the church below them while the Old Testament righteous and kings, Christ's ancestors in the flesh, appear in the two domes above the west end of the church. Compared to the Prizren church, the narthex is also different: all of its vaults and upper parts of the walls are covered with representations of the fixed feasts of the ecclesiastical calendar. Underneath the Dormition of the Virgin we find the usual figures of holy doctors, monks, poets, Constantine and Helena as well as a multitude of the ktetor's intercessors before Christ. The diaconicon and prothesis served also as parekklesia, dedicated to St. Nicholas and the Virgin, and were decorated, accordingly, with their cycles. The prothesis also displays a Celebration of Holy Liturgy while many figures of holy monks appear in the diaconicon.

The fresco decoration of the Annunciation church in Gračanica is accomplished entirely in the new spirit of extensive rendering of the story of the coming of Christ into this world, the Old Testament prophecies of that event, Christ's Ministry and the Passion he suffered on earth, his Resurrection and Second Coming, and of the numerous images of his followers who built themselves into the new Church through their deeds or by the blood of their martyrdom. All this is mostly based on solutions devised in Nagoričino and even Bogorodica Ljeviška. Nevertheless, the novelties which Gračanica brings are not inconsiderable at all and, in fact, they seem to round off the great wealth of subjects rendered in Milutin's churches. The choir is filled with familiar scenes – the Virgin with angles and Christ Emmanuel, too, surrounded by seraphims hovering above her, the Communion of the Apostles, Celebration of Holy Liturgy as well as a series of whole and half-figures of church fathers and scenes tied to Old Testament archetypes of the Church and the Virgin as well as those of the Virgin's life before and ending with the Annunciation. While there were no particular novelties in the decoration of the main dome (Christ Pantokrator, Celestial Liturgy, prophets, evangelists), and the smaller domes repeated the programmes of corner domes of Nagoričino, although with a somewhat more differentiated choice of Old Testament patriarchs and kings, new scenes and numerous iconographic additions appeared in the already well known cycles of the Great Feasts, ministry of Christ, his Miracles and Parables as well as his Passion and Resurrection Appearances. The calendar cycle of fixed feasts spread from the narthex into the naos, and the number of Old Testament personages was suddenly enlarged, too. The entire church interior is encircled with a row half-figures of saints



27
Staro Nagoričino, *Frescoes in the west part of the naos and the narthex*, 1315–1317



28
Staro Nagoričino, *Frescoes in the east part of the naos and the sanctuary*, 1315–1317

among whom those of the forty martyrs of Sebastea are singled out in the nave. The bottom zone of this space is taken up by holy warriors, who appear on the lateral walls, and figures of holy doctors, Constantine and Helena and St. Sava the Serbian on the west wall. The space surrounding the iconostasis and the supposed episcopal throne displays an interesting choice of holy personages. Together with several calendar scenes, most of the wall space in the narrow narthex is reserved for the Last Judgement and portraits of the ktetor, king Milutin, and his ancestors. Two Old Testament scenes are also found in this space – Job on the dump and prophet Elijah Killing the Priests of Baal – as well as half-figures of monks. Images of martyrs and holy women appear in the two lateral passages. Of the two parekklesia flanking the altar, the one on the north is dedicated to St. Nicholas, decorated with a befitting cycle of this saint, while that on the south, in which we find the Vision of Peter of Alexandria, displays quite an unusual choice of Old and New Testament scenes. The apses of both parekklesia are decorated with representations of Celebration of Holy Liturgy, surmounted by images of the Virgin (south) and John the Prodromos (north), while their walls are covered with a large number of figures of the most venerated monks who could not fit into the narthex or the western part of the naos. The programme of the space above the narthex is only partly preserved: apart from the Presentation of Christ (?) and the Virgin in the Temple, we find the figures of Old Testament high priests, Moses, Aaron, Zachary and Samuel, those of stylites and monks. In this multitude of representations in Gračanica it is still possible to discern the subjects which served as the kernels around which the single figures of saints were grouped, precisely those which were the focus of interest of the painters, the ktetors and their counsellors not only in Serbia but in contemporary Byzantine churches as well. This shows how open the Serbian milieu was to Byzantine trends and how ready it was to embrace novelties arriving from Constantinople and Thessaloniki, undoubtedly the leading cultural centres of the Orthodox world in the first decades of the XIV century.[13]

The programme of the katholikon of Chilandar, the frescoes of which are of the same date as those of Gračanica, is quite similar to the programmes of other leading monuments of the age while its own idiosyncrasies are expressed only through the appearance of somewhat uncommon scenes and saints. By comparing the frescoes of Chilandar with the well preserved decoration of Vatopedi (1313) or the somewhat older paintings of the Protaton (around 1300), we can conclude that the Athonite milieu did not formulate its own particular programme of church decoration. The art cultivated in its monasteries at the beginning of the XIV century is only a part of the general artistic trend present throughout the Orthodox world, probably as a result of the crucial impulses disseminated from Constantinople and Thessaloniki. The appearance of local characteristics in any given milieu was natural and so it happened that in Athonite churches images of holy monks and their cycles, especially those of the holy men of Mount Athos which were otherwise far less often represented outside its reaches, were given a very prominent place. Although the fresco decoration of Chilandar was almost entirely covered by a new layer of wall paintings in 1803, the random spots cleaned in our time show that its programme, and often also the composition of the scenes and the appearance of figures, did not undergo any changes at that time.[14] The apse is dominated by a figure of the Virgin Platytera while the arch in front of the apse is taken up by Christ Emmanuel and two archangels, as in the Chilandar church of the Annunciation. The apse also contains a Communion of the Apostles and two forms of Celebration of Holy Liturgy as well as a Mission of the Apostles and Christ parting from the apostles on the Mount of Olives. This heralds the appearance of a considerably enlarged number of scenes in the altar of Chilandar: apart from the Ascension of Christ on the vault, the north and south wall were decorated respectively with representations of the Last Supper and Washing of the Feet while, in addition to those found in the apse, five more scenes based on Passion lections appeared in the altar space. Numerous images of holy fathers of the church were included in the programme of the prothesis along with the Celebration of Holy Liturgy and two Old Testament scenes of eucharistic nature: the righteous Abraham Welcomes the Three Angels and the Hospitality of Abraham (Holy Trinity). The diaconicon is decorated with mostly frontally positioned figures of holy bishops, a Celebration of Holy Liturgy, Vision of Peter of Alexandria and two New Testament scenes: Road to Emmaus and Supper in Emmaus, the latter deliberately placed in the apse. The naos is surmounted by a dome with an image of Christ Pantokrator in its summit, surrounded by representations of celestial powers and a Celestial Liturgy, while twelve prophets stand between the windows of the drum. Evangelists were painted on the pendentives and Great Feasts on the vaults of the arms of the cross. Old Testament prophets, the Annunciation, the Anapeson and one of Christ's sermons were

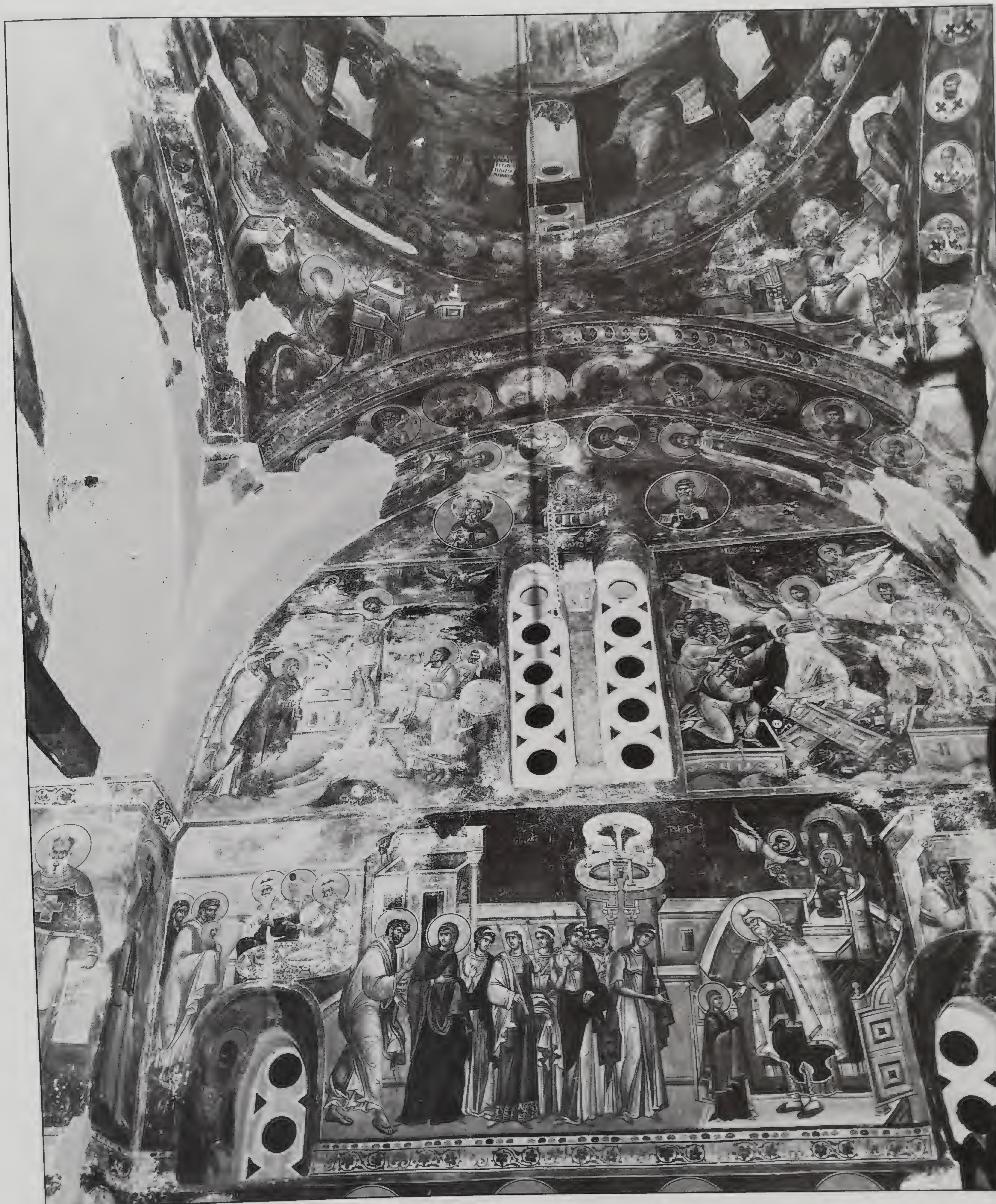
represented around the iconostasis. The uppermost parts of the lateral conchs are taken up by the Baptism and the Lamentation, while the uppermost zones of the naos walls are reserved for scenes of Passion which – in the north-east corner – blend into scenes of the Passion lections spreading all the way to the altar. On the lateral walls, the zone decorated with illustrations of the miracles, sermons and parables of Christ is interrupted by the two most important scenes from the cycle of the Virgin, her Birth and Presentation in the Temple, located in the north and south conch. The Dormition is located on the west wall of the naos and below it are depictions of events from the Virgin's childhood and youth. In the lowest zone of the naos we see a somewhat greater number of holy monks so that the companies of holy warriors had to be moved into the east part of the choirs. Together with the figures of apostles Peter and Paul, Constantine and Helena and the Synaxis of the Archangels, the space around the entrance is dominated by a large half-figure of Christ the Gate painted above the central doorway. Finally, in the space surrounding Nemanja's original tomb we find a gathering of the ktetors of Chilandar, St. Symeon, St. Sava and king Milutin, with St. Stephen the Protomartyr blessing this procession. The representation most important for the ktetor is located on the east wall of the narthex: the Virgin with Christ on her lap, surrounded by angels, being addressed by St. Symeon Nemanja and St. Sava with king Milutin, blessed by St. Stephen, offering her the donor's chrysobuls through the intercession of the Byzantine emperor, Andronikos II. On the opposite wall, we find a portrait of Andronikos III, painted immediately after he had become his grandfather's co-regent in 1320. Soon after Milutin's death (October 29th, 1321), a portrait of his son Stephen and apparently that of Dušan were painted on a new layer of mortar. Other scenes on this wall were chosen with equal care: Wisdom Hath Builded Her House (probably an allusion to Milutin's construction of the Chilandar church), the Crucifixion and the Prayer of St. John Chrysostomos. Another significant subject, the Incarnation of Christ, was illustrated through a series of its Old Testament archetypes, either in the guise of the deeds or simply the single figures of his forefathers, located in and beneath the domes raised above the west part of the narthex. All the vaults were covered with scenes from the lives of celebrated monks, primarily those of their miracles, while the walls were taken up by the holy martyrs, doctors and monks, including those who lived in ascesis in the monasteries and deserts of Mount Athos.

The extent of fresco programmes from the first decades of the XIV century and their dependence on liturgical lections is exemplified also by the well preserved wall paintings of the more modest churches raised by king Milutin. The tiny Kraljeva crkva in Studenica, dedicated to Sts. Joachim and Anne, with its simple and harmonious architecture, contains an exceptionally rich and interesting programme of frescoes.[15] Its apse is taken up by three compositions: the enthroned Virgin with Christ and the angels, the Communion of the Apostles and the Celebration of Holy Liturgy (the most significant part of which, the Amnos, was singled out within a separate apsidal niche), and throughout the altar space there are figures of church fathers with or without their unrolled scrolls. In Studenica, too, parts of cycles dedicated to the Great Feasts and the Virgin, which took up most of the naos space, made an incursion into the sanctuary. Going a step further from Nagoričino, the Pantokrator in the dome is surrounded not by angels but by presentations of powers from the vision of Ezekiel, along with the Celestial Liturgy and the prophets between the window openings in the drum. Below them, however, stand the half-figures of the Virgin's ancestors, beginning with Adam and Eve and ending with king Manasseh. Because of the restricted space, the choice of figures in the bottom zone had to be considerably abridged while, at the same time, the entire south wall was reserved for the representation of Milutin offering his church to Christ and the north for those of St. Symeon and St. Sava, the king's intercessors before the Virgin and Christ. For those reasons even the smallest bit of wall space was filled with half or full-length figures of apostles, martyrs, stylites, doctors and poets.

The church of St. Nikita near Skoplje has an even more extensive programme of fresco decoration, less dedicated to the celebration of the Virgin but, nonetheless, just as involved in the progressive currents of contemporary Serbian and Byzantine art. Most of the new frescoes painted in this church in 1484 did not disturb the original programme for, regardless of the wall spaces still covered with paintings of this later date, it is still easily discernible.[16] Subjects tied to the Eucharist are singled out in the altar space, where the standing figure of the Virgin flanked by two angels is accompanied by a Communion of the Apostles and Celebration of Holy Liturgy – with a large number of church fathers, even those who are otherwise rarely represented in this composition, taking part in it – as well as a number of Old Testament scenes and high priests and the Vision of Peter of Alexandria. As in a



29
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Frescoes in the south part of the church*, 1318–1319



30
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Frescoes in the north part of the church*, 1318–1319

number of other contemporary churches, scenes related to Passion lections also appear in the altar space. Of the older frescoes in the dome, only some of the prophets and evangelists below them remain, again not all, as well as the Mandelion and Keramion. The vaults were covered with scenes of the Feasts and the walls, going from top to bottom, with cycles related to Christ, his Passion, Miracles and other deeds on earth. The fresco decoration around the iconostasis is rather similar to that of the Chilandar katholikon. One of Christ's sermons and an Anapeson take up the front faces of the two piers while the lowest zone is reserved for Christ the Merciful and the Virgin Suppliant. In their immediate midst we find the patron saint of the church singled out under a painted arch. Beside him, in the space beneath the dome, we find the figures of other holy warriors not only on this but on the opposite, south wall as well. In the west part of the church, the zone closest to the ground is filled with images of holy monks, including those of St. Symeon Nemanja and St. Sava. The archangels Michael and Gabriel and apostles Peter and Paul, usually represented around entrances, have been moved deeper into the naos and placed on the piers.

The well known programme of fresco decoration of domed churches, distributed with a rarely disregarded regularity, underwent a number of alterations when applied to structures without domes such as the church of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos in Thessaloniki and that of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim, where the miniature dome above the transverse vault is extremely small and unusual in appearance. The distribution of frescoes in the central part of the church of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos is similar to that of the Saviour's church in Veria (1315) but also has its isiosyncrasies.[17] The Virgin, bearing the epithet Acheiropoiitos, and the archangels surrounding her filled the apse so that the remaining space below them could only hold the Celebration of Holy Liturgy while the Communion of the Apostles was moved to the walls flanking the apse. The altar space was also decorated with a rather large number of evangelical scenes related to Christ's Nativity and his Passion while the walls of the naos were designated for scenes of the Great Feasts, Christ's Passion, representations of the evangelists, painted on the intrados of arches opening towards the side aisles, and half-figures of holy doctors and warriors in the bottom zone. As in Chilandar, apart from Christ and the Virgin, the walls surrounding the iconostasis are decorated with figures of John the Prodromos and John the Theologian. The miracles of Christ were placed in the south aisle, together with Old Testament archetypes of the Virgin and a cycle of St. Gerasimos. Apart from representations of holy women, the north aisle is dominated by the Akathistos of the Virgin, a new subject in Byzantine wall painting. The cycle of the patron saint, St. Nicholas, is located in the narthex the programme of which was originally dominated by illustrations of the calendar. Images of holy monks were also painted here while St. Nicholas, the Virgin with Christ and apostles Peter and Paul were represented around the entrance. While most of the frescoes in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos follow the familiar solutions of Byzantine and Serbian early XIV century church art, their distribution and iconography is quite specific in many respects.

Although badly damaged, the frescoes in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim River still allow us to note that the vaults and walls of this small building were originally decorated only with scenes of the Great Feasts and that their content was imbued with a new spirit. The altar space was covered with a choice of representations conformed to its symbolic meaning and significance while all the others were located in the naos of the church. The apse also received a figure of the Virgin with Christ surrounded by angels and figures of church fathers from the Celebration of Holy Liturgy in its lowest zone. The cycle of Christ's Passion on the walls of the narthex probably owes its location in this space to an older layer of frescoes of identical contents, as is the case with the repainted ktetor's composition. On the other hand, portraits of bishops of Hum and heads of the Serbian church and state, archbishop Nikodim and king Milutin with members of his family, make their first appearance on the walls of the narthex only at this point in time.[18]

Even this brief canvass of fresco programmes found churches of Milutin's age reveals how extended their range of subjects is when compared to that found in Serbian art of the first half and middle of the XIII century. It is also obvious that the period around the turn of the XIV century was precisely the turning point in the guest for new solutions, a phenomenon parallel to contemporary currents in Byzantine art. Although Arilje was still tied to the traditions of the XIII century, the transfer of illustrations of Passion lections to the space beneath the dome in the naos announced the introduction of other cycles to this part of the church. A departure from tradition is also sensed in the placing of figures of Old Testament high priests in the dome. True, their unusual location will not be repeated in subsequent monuments but these figures will regularly appear either in the proximity of

altar screens or in altar spaces of churches. Thus, knowing that one of the most important characteristics of XIV century painting is a frequent employ of Old Testament subjects in the function of "historiating" New Testament events and those tied to liturgical rites, their very appearance in Arilje can already be regarded as a significant novelty. The above mentioned Old Testament scenes were usually placed in the narthex (for example in Bogorodica Ljeviška, Žiča, Gračanica and Chilandar). At times they also appeared in other parts of the church, usually in the altar space, as in Gračanica, St. Nikita and elsewhere. Besides, the narthex was always open for the incursion of new subjects – those inspired by the Old and the New Testament, poetry, hagiography, history, eschatology – the didactic nature of which was moreless clearly expressed. They often served as an introduction to the liturgical paintings in the naos and the altar. The programmes of those spatial units usually held on to subjects already seen there in earlier times although some cycles previously rarely represented on those locations do emerge in these parts of the church. Apart from the Great Feasts, illustrations of Christ's Miracles, Parables, Sermons, Passion and Resurrection Appearances now become almost standard. They emerge already in Arilje and after that in Bogorodica Ljeviška, Nagoričino, Chilandar, Gračanica and St. Nikita. Hagiographic cycles are also included in the decoration of the naos (Sušica, Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva, Chilandar) and the altar (Gračanica). They are also still frequently encountered in the parekklesia of Arilje, Žiča, Bogorodica Ljeviška, Nagoričino and Gračanica. Even those parts of the church which could hardly have been expected to adopt novelties were enriched with previously rarely represented subjects: the altar spaces of Gračanica and St. Nikita received a larger number of Old Testament scenes and the domes of Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva, Gračanica and Chilandar were filled with liturgical subjects. Either under the influence of texts read during church services and the teachings of Byzantine and Serbian literature or as a result of emulation of far older works of art, some scenes were enlarged with extensive prologues, epilogues and other addenda. Because of all that, the art of this age was greatly changed, it became at once very narrative and laden with deeper meanings. However, this sort of broad elaboration was implemented with much care and harmony, usually by grouping scenes around several basic themes according to principles which were often determined by liturgical practices. Because of that, the number of subject was considerably enlarged, they were accompanied by long inscriptions, their iconography became more complex and they often blended into one another in order to convey the harmony of the Old and the New Testament and the two worlds, the celestial and the earthly, of Christ's Incarnation and his Sacrifice, of the mystery of the Eucharist and His Second Coming.

Representations of the Lord's Dwelling

From the art of earlier epochs, the painting of Milutin's age adopted and further developed the idea of the celestial world, depicting it most often in domes and expressing it through the employ of an iconography entirely imbued with liturgical meanings.[19] The focal point of this formula was Christ Pantokrator surrounded by hosts of celestial powers, prophets and varions saints. This pattern conveyed the image of Celestial Jerusalem and underlined the significance of Christ's Old and New Testament epiphany. That theme was predominant in Komnenian art and was adopted by Palaiologan painting from that source.

In each of king Milutin's churches, except Žiča, Christ Pantokrator, the image of eternal God constantly venerated by angles in heaven and by men on earth, the one who revealed Himself in the words or visions of the prophets and the one who at one point became Incarnated, is represented in the calotte of the central dome. Although the fresco decoration of their calottes is now missing, such images of Him must also have been painted in Arilje and St. Nikita. In churches with lateral domes, Christ was represented there as well: in Bogorodica Ljeviška he appears in the guise of Emmanuel, Ancient of Days, the Archpriest and "in his own age",[20] thus in forms in which He revealed Himself to men, either in their visions or in the flesh. According to medieval concepts best expressed by Pseudo-Dionysos the Areopagite, in his Dwelling, God is surrounded by nine angelic orders. This idea is reflected in the art of Milutin's age: in the church of the Virgin Parigoritissa in Arta (around 1290) and in the katholikon of Chilandar monastery the bust of Christ Pantokrator is surrounded by the different orders of angels.[21] Emulating the model set by Bogorodica Ljeviška, the small domes of Gračanica retained their celestial connotation and had images of the Thrones, Seraphim and Angels painted on their pendentives while in Chilandar the total picture is lost due to the omission of the different guises of Christ and their replacement with images of the evangelists bearing written testimonies of His Incarnation.[22] In some churches of Milutin's era, the simple images of





31
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška,
Frescoes in the central dome, 1309–1313

32
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Angel with a scroll in the central dome*, 1309–1313

Christ set in medallions received significant additions which heralded His Cherubic throne, an idea certainly based on Old Testament visions. In Kraljeva crkva the Pantokrator is surrounded by the seraph, the angel and the eagle from Ezekiel's vision of God in heaven (Ezekiel 1, 4–11), the ox and the lion are damaged. Once books were placed in their hands they became the symbols of the evangelists for it was the celestial powers who transmitted the image of God to men before whom He was to appear Incarnate, as attested by the writings of the evangelists. In Bogorodica Ljeviška and Staro Nagoričino, Christ Pantokrator is surrounded by a divine blue light with angels hovering among its rays. In their flight they





33
Gračanica,
Christ Pantokrator and the Celestial Liturgy, 1319–1321

34
Gračanica, *Celestial Liturgy*, detail, 1319–1321

35
Gračanica, *Celestial Liturgy*, detail, 1319–1321

celebrate the Lord and pass on to the prophets the words which they proclaim to the people.[23] During this age, the image of Christ on His Cherubic throne, adopted from prophetic visions (Isaiah 6, 2–3), is going to appear several times: twice in Gračanica, in the apex of the apse and in the ktetor's composition, as well as in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, as a part of the illustration of the Akathistos of the Virgin (verse 15) and certainly inspired by the verses of this hymn. In Arilje, the bright red colour surrounding Christ in the Vision of Peter of Alexandria and in scenes of benediction of the ktetor and his children is a sign of his divine energy.[24]

In conveying the celestial realm, the Serbian mil-

ieu was quick to adopt and develop with creativity the novelties reaching it from Byzantine cultural and spiritual centres. This is best observed in the case of the Celestial Liturgy, the oldest fresco representation of which has been preserved in Staro Nagoričino. Gradually but nonetheless promptly, from one monument to the next, it received new elements and deeper meanings.[25] It is well known that comparisons between earthly and celestial liturgy have a long history, the concordance of one and the other is underlined in words and church rites, priests are likened to angels and earthly rites seen only as a reflection, an "image" of those performed around the Throne of God in heaven.[26] The Celestial Liturgy in Staro Nagoričino is still without a representation of the Amnos on the altar and, what's more, it is actually based on older depictions of celestial powers gathered around the Pantokrator. However, the celestial duality of the event is underlined by the inclusion of the Cherubim and the Thrones in the procession of angel-deacons carrying liturgical objects, probably under direct influence of the Trisagion hymn in which the other celestial orders are mentioned alongside the angels who celebrate God: "O Holy God, who restest in the holies, unto whom the seraphim sing the thrice-holy song, whom the cherubim glorify, and all the heavenly hosts adore". In Kraljeva crkva the Celestial Liturgy is better preserved. The Amnos is still missing but we do see two groups of archangels and angel-deacons bearing rhypidia and other liturgical instruments in their hands or above their heads as they approach the altar tables surmounted by baldachinos. As in Nagoričino, this scene is very similar to the Great Entrance, a liturgical rite during which the sacred offerings are carried in a solemn circular procession from the prothesis, through the naos, to the altar on which they are laid out. In Gračanica, the scene is even more like the actual rite performed in the church: here, too, we find two altar tables. One is empty and covered by a baldachino, reminiscent of that of the prothesis whence the sacred offerings had come from. They are now being carried in the hands or above the heads of angel-deacons greeted by censer bearing angels at the entrance to the altar. On the other altar table, however, we find the reclining figure of Amnos, surrounded by a multitude of angels and guarded by a labarum bearing cherub. In Chilandar, the Celestial Liturgy had a similar appearance. There, however, the Pantokrator was surrounded by all the angelic orders.[27] Thus, in less than a decade, in Serbian churches the image of angelic liturgy taking place in heaven was given its most important features and clear meanings.



36
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Prophet Elijah*, 1318–1319



37
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Prophet Habakkuk*, 1318–1319

The learned counsellors of king Milutin who came from the highest ecclesiastical circles were responsible for this transformation of the old image of heaven achieved through an introduction of a series of novel elements. According to medieval concepts, before the coming of Christ into this world it was impossible for mankind, which had fallen into sin, to see and celebrate God. The only exceptions were the few elect righteous men or prophets who did see him in their visions, listened to him and passed on to other men his messages or the truth about him. Because of that, they were regularly represented below the Pantokrator in the dome, together with the texts of their prophecies or the objects which were the symbols of events to come. Most often, the churches of Milutin's age adopted this formula. Except for testimonies of divine epiphanies or messages, the texts written out on their scrolls rarely reveal any other specific intentions. On the other hand, it was precisely the desire to convey as much as possible through a given image, often in the language of symbols or personifications, that initiated the representation of prophets in the moment of reception of divine inspiration. At times, in Nagoričino for example, only the rays of light from Christ's mandorla stretch out in their direction. In other instances, in Bogorodica Ljeviška for example, angels surging forth from Christ land before the prophets handing them their inscribed scrolls, in fact, the very words which they must deliver to the people.[28] In this Prizren church, only prophet Isaiah is approached by a seraph offering him a spoon with live coals, as in his vision (Isaiah 6, 6–7), by which God purged him and made him fit to prophesise, so that his is the only figure raising its head up in great excitement.

The apostles were witnesses of the New Testament teophany and some of them – the evangelists – described in words the Incarnation of Christ, his sacrifice and foundation of the Church on earth. For those reasons, throughout time and, of course, in the days of king Milutin, too, they usually appear on pendentives, beneath the image of Christ Pantokrator, in the act of writing their gospels. Christ's epiphany before men in his carnal hypostasis was only a part of Divine Providence because through his Incarnation heaven and earth, the celestial and the earthly world, were united (Gregory of Nyssa, IV century) and, in the exegesis of Psuedo-Dionysos the Areopagite, the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ was announced first to the angels and through them delivered to the people.[29] Although the prophets saw this mystery only in its hidden form, XIV century painters, emulating Early Christian models, placed gospel books in the


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hands of incorporeal beings thus uniting once again the two Testaments. The eagle and the angel surrounding the Pantokrator in Kraljeva crkva hold books and are thus transformed into symbols and Old Testament images of the evangelists. In some of the other churches, however, the divine inspiration of the evangelists is rendered in a more precisely defined manner, as an act of Divine Wisdom: in Bogorodica Ljeviška Divine Wisdom is represented in the form of angels landing before the evangelists and offering them scrolls, while in Staro Nagoričino and St. Nikita images of the Divine Wisdom herself are painted right by the figures of evangelists. Such a solution, used already so many times in more ancient art, and in this case adopted from X–XI century manuscripts, translated abstract ideas into easily recognisable visual forms.[30]

Apart from these comprehensive solutions, Serbian churches of Milutin's age were also, and in fact more often, decorated with simple representations of the evangelists which, however, differ in location and appearance from monument to monument. In Arilje, for example, they are placed in interiors of buildings.

38
Gračanica, *Prophet Ezekiel*, 1319–1321

39
Gračanica, *Prophet Isaiah*, 1319–1321

40
Gračanica, *Evangelist Mark*, 1319–1321

41
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Prophet Zechariah*, 1309–1313

This is also the case in Bogorodica Ljeviška, Žiča, Kraljeva crkva, Gračanica and Chilandar. In Studenica, Chilandar and St. Nikita, the evangelist John is shown with his disciple Prochor. In Staro Nagoričino and Gračanica evangelists were painted in the calottes of the lateral domes, in place of the different guises of Christ depicted there in Bogorodica Ljeviška. Among representations of various types of Christ in that church – not free of influences of Old Testament visions and their liturgical variations – we discern the images of God the Eternal (Ancient of Days), the Incarnate (Emmanuel), the High Priest (Christ in another form) and the Ruler of the World (Pantokrator). In churches of a later date, the incarnated Christ is given a more prominent role, as indicated by the written testimonies of the four evangelists, in particular those from the two western domes of Nagoričino. Visible testimonies of the incarnated Christ – his images on the Mandelion and the Keramion – were regularly placed close to those provided by the evangelists, namely between the pendentives, on the east and west side. Only in cases where space was inadequate or the church had no dome at all, these images of Christ were moved into the sanctuary (Arilje) or, in Dragutin's chapel, Sušica and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, even as far as the apse itself.

The Theme of Incarnation

These images already belong to another group of themes tied to the Incarnation of Christ which, beyond any doubt, represent the most significant novelty in late Byzantine art. The mystery of Christ's conception and birth and the role of the Virgin in it were very important to early XIV century painters working in Serbia who adopted the most progressive solutions coming from Constantinople and other artistic centres, adapted them and, at times, even enhanced them with some previously unknown scenes. Gospel texts did not offer enough material for an extensive depiction of this theme so that parts of Old Testament prophetologion lections, as well as poetic texts, were also taken into account, both genres in the form in which they were used at church services. In that way connections were established with ancient liturgical and literary sources and a series of almost forgotten symbols, allegories and personifications found their way back into the visual arts. Complex compositions filled with beautiful winged maidens with bare arms, angels and choirs of singers, all accompanied by long inscriptions, emerged on church walls. All that changed the appearance of the scenes and the criteria for their painting in churches, especially within spaces programmatically less strictly subjected to liturgical requirements such as entrances, nartheces and lateral structures. At first glance, the transformation of the chosen subjects and the new iconography made painting very narrative but, in fact, it was full of hidden meanings. The Virgin played an especially prominent role and many churches were raised in her honour. In Byzantium, by special imperial decree, the entire month of August was dedicated to her.

At first, around the year 1300, it seemed that Serbian painting was lagging behind in showing an interest in this theme, so vehemently expressed in Byzantine art, and that, therefore, Serbian art was going to join the class of provincial works produced on the Greek islands and the distant regions of the Orthodox world. There was only an inkling of new developments in Dragutin's chapel where figures of the Virgin's parents, Joachim and Anne, do number among the few represented saints. What's more, they are painted close to the apse. In Arilje, they appear on the triumphal arch. Although much of the fresco programme of Arilje is tied to the middle of the XIII century, a short cycle of the Virgin does appear in its naos. At the same time, in the Protaton on Mount Athos, Christ's corporeal ancestors ("as was supposed", Luke 3, 23) were painted in the uppermost zone of the central nave in the order in which they are mentioned in the gospel (Luke 3, 23–27), starting with Adam and Eve. This is also related to the order in which they are mentioned in the services of the Week of the Forefathers before Christmas. As in Arilje, prophets carrying objects heralding the role of the Virgin in the Incarnation of Christ and his priesthood were represented in front of the sanctuary. There were still no images of the Virgin or Emmanuel which were to become standard in the course of the XIV century. In the prothesis of the Protaton we also find three Old Testament compositions which represent comprehensive archetypes of the Virgin: the Burning Bush, Jacob's Ladder and the Old Testament Tabernacle.[31] In the decoration of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid, comparison between Old Testament events and the Virgin is even more developed. They are revealed as archetypes of the mystery of Incarnation Which, in turn, considerably enriches the iconography of this theme. The Virgin is especially celebrated in the decoration of the narthex which offers a series of her Old Testament archetypes. The east wall of this space was reserved for the Christmas Hymn, also related to the Incarnation of Christ. In Ohrid, this theme spreads



XI

Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *King Milutin*, 1309–1313



XII

Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Communion of the Apostles*, 1309–1313



XIII

Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Christ the Guardian of Prizren*, 1309–1313







XIV

Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška,
St. Athanasios the Great, 1309–1313

XV

Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška,
The Virgin with Christ, 1308–1313

XVI

Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška,
Holy warrior, 1309–1313

XVII

Staro Nagoričino, *Frescoes on the south wall of the sanctuary*, 1315–1317


ΟΧΡΥ ϹΟϹΤΟ ΜΟϹ
ΑΘΑΝΑϹΙ Ο ΜΕΓΑϹ
ΚΥΡΙ ΛΛΟϹ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙ



XVIII

Staro Nagoričino, *Road to Calvary*, 1315–1317



XIX

Staro Nagoričino, *Ascent of the Cross*, 1315–1317



XX

Staro Nagoričino, *Frescoes on the north wall of the naos*, 1315–1317



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Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Eve, Adam and the Mandelion*, 1318–1319

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Gračanica, *Prophet Aaron*, 1319–1321

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Gračanica, *Prophet Moses*, 1319–1321



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Žiča, *Prophet Moses*, around 1310

also into the sanctuary so that a figure of the Virgin Platytera is shown in the apse. Above her is Christ Emmanuel in a medallion and surrounded by angels while images of Mary's Old Testament ancestors and righteous men appear on either side of the apse.[32] The surviving churches of Constantinople show that themes related to the Virgin and the Incarnation of Christ held a prominent place in their programmes, whether in the form of Christ's corporeal ancestors, as they are mentioned in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, or in the guise of Old Testament archetypes of the Virgin. In Constantinople, Old Testament figures were painted in the narthex domes of Hagioi Theodoroi (Kilisse camii) and the Chora. Other Old Testament scenes were also located around entrances (St. Mary Pammakaristos) or in parekklesia (the Chora).[33] Certain solutions devised in Constantinople, more in the sense of their location than iconography, appeared in Serbian churches or those raised by king Milutin outside his fatherland.

An increased interest in the Virgin and the mystery of Christ's birth, as well as in offering proof that these events had been announced long before, focused the attention of the creators of iconographic programmes from around the year 1300 on solutions already formulated in XI and XII century art. One such image was the Tree of Jesse, a representation based on Old Testament texts speaking of Christ – the rod that shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse (Isaiah 11, 1–3), the father of king David and founder of the genealogical line that leads to Christ. Since Byzantine art was never tantamount to a simple illustration of a given text, the shaping of this theme was also inspired by Christmas tide liturgical lections and those related to the feasts of the Virgin. It is also rooted in prophetic texts, poetry and homilies which glorified the Virgin as the staff and Christ as the bloom that came from the tree of Jesse.[34] The Tree of Jesse in Arilje is different from all previous examples of this scene seen in the Virgin Mavriotissa, Sopoćani and Manastir near Prilep. Nevertheless, its iconography does entirely conform to the spirit of the new artistic tendencies of the second half of the XIII century. However, since most of the represented figures have no scrolls, or, in case they do, they are either rolled up or display only brief and illegible texts, it is difficult to ascertain all the sources which inspired this fresco from Arilje. The novelty of this Tree of Jesse lies in the fact that it consists of both Old and New Testament scenes (the angel halting Balaam's ass, Gideon's Fleece, Nativity of Christ with archangel Michael on horseback) which comple-

ment the prophecies of Christ's incarnation and link them with the moment in which they were actually realised. In Arilje we can also discern an attempt to include other wise men in this composition, not only those mentioned in the Old Testament, and, among them, a pagan sibyl, too.[35] This was even more pronounced in Žiča, where a group of ancient philosophers took up the entire bottom zone, and Bogorodica Ljeviška, where they appear on an arch located to the right of this composition.[36] Compared to older examples, the appearance of this Prizren Tree of Jesse is altogether different because it spreads across the entire vault of the north part of the exonarthex and includes tens of figures, half-figures and scenes in its foliage. Although nearly half of this fresco is damaged, it is beyond any doubt that Jesse was lying at the root of the tree and that images of prophets carrying texts of their visions of God were distributed among its branches. Only random traces of them remain today along with utterly abridged representations of the New Testament scenes which they prophesied – the Annunciation, Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Baptism, Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, Crucifixion and others – so that, in a way, this painting sums up Christ's entire life on earth. The Prizren Tree of Jesse offers another significant novelty, logical from the point of view of XIV century art which strove in every way to single out the corporeal ancestors of Christ. Under direct influence of the services preceding Christmas, all or almost all of Christ's ancestors from the genealogies found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke are found among the branches and flowers of this tree. Only traces of their names still remain: Zorobabel, Judah, Eliud, Joatham, Asher, Abiud, Esrom, Eleazar, Matthan, Aram... All these elements encumbered the composition and turned it into a complex representation of Old Testament prophecies of Christ, evangelical testimonies of his Incarnation and sacrifice supported by the words of the wise men of antiquity and deeply imbued with liturgical order. The purpose of this complexity is to point out the triumphant appearance of the enthroned Christ blessing with both hands his ancestors and all those who heralded his coming. Thus, the Tree of Jesse in Bogorodica Ljeviška represents a turning point in the iconographic development of this subject and a precursor of its extensive versions found in monuments from around the middle of the XIV century.[37]

Images of Christ's ancestors, usually in some sort of relation with the Virgin or Christ Emmanuel, also assume places of honour in the Virgin Peribleptos, around the apse, in the Protaton, the top zone of frescoes in the naos, or in the Constantinopolitan churches of Hagioi Theodoroi and Christ of the Chora, in the narthex domes. In these two latter churches Old Testament kings are singled out from the other righteous and placed within separate domes. What's more, in the Chora each and every son of Jacob is also represented. This subject is probably of Constantinopolitan origin, born out of a desire to explain more persuasively the human nature of Christ and his role as high priest and king. Lined up side by side, Old Testament high priests and kings constituted a sort of horizontal genealogical tree and it is therefore not surprising that they were incorporated into the Tree of Jesse at the beginning of the XIV century, regardless of the fact that some of them actually lived before the days of David's father. These personages were also represented in Serbian churches of Milutin's age, sometimes in the manner of Constantinopolitan church art and at others with specific iconographic traits. In Serbian art they first appear in Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren, in the drums of the small domes, where they seem to mingle with other prophets: the south-east and south-west domes are taken up by prophets who do not belong to Christ's genealogy while the other two small domes, on the north side of the church, were apparently reserved for the eight sons of Jacob (the inscriptions by Naphtali, Gad, Asher and Zebulun are well preserved and it seems that Reuben and Issachar can be identified in the north-west dome). All this is in accordance with the Constantinopolitan manner of their representation. In the gospels they are not individually mentioned but they are all included in the Service of the Forefathers.[38] In other Serbian churches of this era, Old Testament righteous, patriarchs and kings were also painted in the uppermost zones. At the base of the dome in Kraljeva crkva their line begins with Eve and Adam and ends with king Manasseh, in the order in which they are listed in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 1, 1–16).[39]

In Serbian churches, the detachment of Old Testament kings from the rest of the righteous into separate domes, as observed in Hagioi Theodoroi and the monastery of Christ of the Chora in Constantinople, first takes place in Staro Nagoričino. Five Old Testament kings, considerably damaged today, were painted in the drum of the small dome covering the south-west corner of the narthex. Figures of Old Testament righteous were located in the dome over the north-west corner. Regardless of the existence of significant differences (absence of the Virgin with Christ, a greatly reduced number of figures, Solomon represented with a scroll inscribed with the text of Proverbs 5, 1), Nagoričino is still linked with Constantinopolitan

churches by the same intention to "historiate" the genealogical tree of Christ through a long line of Old Testament prophets. The same intention is sensed also in the fact that the calottes of the small domes of Nagoričino are decorated with images of the evangelists with open gospels. A seemingly minor alteration of the evangelical text appears in the book held by Mark: it reads "Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, son of David" instead of "son of God". Apart from the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 1, 1), David is spoken of quite precisely as Christ's ancestor in the flesh in other New Testament texts (Acts of the Apostles 13, 22–23; Romans 1, 3; II Timothy 2, 8) and church poetry as well.[40]

The two west domes of Gračanica were also decorated with images of members of the tribe of David, that is, the figures of Old Testament kings starting with David and ending with Hosea, the same personages which appear in the Chora. In the Constantinopolitan church their meaning is clearer due to an image of the Virgin with infant Christ which appears in the apex and indicates that they were meant to explain the royal lineage of the Virgin and the role of Christ King, just as the Supplicatory Kanon to the Virgin says.[41] By exception, the line of Old Testament kings in the south dome over the narthex of Chilandar begins with Jesse (thus approaching in meaning the Tree of Jesse). In the other dome, on the north side, we see the first righteous men, ancestors of Christ, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mt. 1, 2), as well as some of Jacob's sons: Levi, Dan, Gad, Zebulun and Asher.[42] All twelve sons of Jacob were painted in the south dome of the Chora, below a line of the righteous which begins with Adam. Only some of them were depicted in Bogorodica Ljeviška. The choice of figures found in the north dome over the narthex of the katholikon of Chilandar is based on the opening lines of the Gospel of Matthew. In essence, however, it emulates the division into groups of Old Testament patriarchs and kings seen in the Chora. In an abridged form, the same partition is also carried out in the west domes of Nagoričino, with an intention to point out the idea of Christ-Archpriest and Christ-King.

The strong influence of liturgy on Byzantine painting of the early XIV century, as well as on that of king Milutin's churches, is also recognised in the representation of other prophets, regardless of whether or not they are mentioned in Nativity services and synaxaria and whether or not they belong to the genealogy of Christ. Except for the dome, where they were depicted from the very beginning, other locations in the church were found for them – most often, the upper parts of the naos. On the pilasters, piers and arches of Nagoričino we find thirteen Old Testament personages with unrolled scrolls or carrying objects by which they herald the events of the New Testament. In Gračanica, their number is even greater and, judging by the fact that some of them carry objects decorated with Mary's image, they were certainly meant to complement the theme of the Incarnation. Among them, the place of honour was accorded to Old Testament high priests or those who, at one point or another, had assumed that role: Aaron, Moses, Samuel, Melchizedek and Zachary. Those are the same characters who had already appeared in an unusual location in the dome of Arilje or directly beneath it in Petrova crkva and the parekklesia of Žiča. Even more often, they were painted near or within altar spaces, as in Žiča, Chilandar, St. Nikita. In Gračanica they also appear in the space above the narthex. The tablets of the laws, the candlestick, the vessel containing manna and the rod, the breads, the horn and the censer they carry are Old Testament prototypes of the New Testament, as confirmed also by images of the Virgin on them.[43] In Gračanica, Mary is depicted only on the objects placed in the hands of Moses and Aaron and it is certainly no coincidence that their figures were painted in the vicinity of the Annunciation, close to the prophets David and Solomon.

In the first decades of the XIV century the Annunciation was a scene of great interest to liturgists and painters alike. Through it, they were able to express the rich scale of meanings, allusions and metaphors related to the Virgin and the coming of Christ into the world. In Staro Nagoričino, this theme drew around it the figures of David and Solomon and half-figures of prophet Daniel and patriarch Jacob: they both carry inscribed scrolls in their hands, a rock with an image of Christ Emmanuel is painted by Daniel while the star in Jacob's hand also encloses a representation of Emmanuel.[44] The iconography of these frescoes is borrowed from the hymn "The Prophets from Above" the illustration of which appeared for the first time in wall painting exactly at the beginning of the XIV century, in Bogorodica Ljeviška. In icon painting and book illumination it emerged at a considerably earlier date. The singling out of these two prophets carrying texts and prefigurations of the Incarnation in the vicinity of the Annunciation was unknown to earlier Byzantine art. However, it matches perfectly the early XIV century tendencies to enrich the standard iconographic solutions with combinations of images and matching texts, through the intercession of sacred poetry. Most popular were those passages based on the Old Testa-



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Staro Nagoričino, *Prophet Jacob*, 1315–1317

ment which were implanted into the, in many respects, new scenes. Prophet Daniel and patriarch Jacob were especially frequently cited and interpreted in the process of proving the Old Testament annunciation of the coming of Christ into this world. In Nagoričino, as on the fresco illustrating "The Prophets from Above" hymn in Ljeviška, Daniel is depicted with a rock. Already in the poetry of St. John of Damascus and St. Andrew of Crete, as well as in that of other famous hymnographers, the Virgin is exalted as the spiritual mountain from the prophecy of Daniel and the motif of the rock detached from the mountain was favoured in hymns dedicated to the Virgin and often mentioned in church services.[45] In these times, the typological image of Christ's incarnation tied to Jacob was associated with his dream of the heavenly ladder (Genesis 28, 10–22) and represented in this guise in Bogorodica Ljeviška and Chilandar. The same motif is also included in the Prizren composition of "The Prophets from Above". In it, prophet Balaam is depicted holding a star because, although often associated with Jacob (Numbers 24, 17), the prophecy of the star is actually his. The subject of the star is often used in Byzantine homilies and poetry. St. Athanasios of Alexandria (IV century) included it in the Old Testament annunciation of future events and Anatolios (VII century), whose sticheron is incorporated in Nativity services, elaborated the motif of the star associating it with Christ, the all-enlightening light.[46]

The starry sky behind the Virgin appears in two of king Milutin's churches, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos and Gračanica. In Serbian churches dating from around 1300, the Virgin was always depicted in the uppermost zone of the apse, but in a series of different guises: as Platytera with (Gračanica, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, St. Nikita) or without angels (Chilandar katholikon), with an image of Christ in a medallion on her chest (Sušica) or signed as Acheiropoiitos (Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos). She was also represented as an enthroned figure with Christ on her lap and surrounded by archangels (Staro Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva, Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim). From the moment she began to be painted in this spot the Virgin assumed the connotation of the Church on Earth and in the age of the Palaiologoi, when she was usually depicted enthroned, she became also an image of the Temple, i.e. the throne of the Logos.[47] The Virgin-Temple, new Tabernacle and Church, was often the subject of liturgical poetry and hymns sung on her feast days as a part of various church services.[48] Having given birth to the Son of God, the Virgin became the link between the separated, between God and mankind, heaven and earth, the Creator and the creation, and, thus, she herself became the Church. On the fresco from Staro Nagoričino, the infant Christ in the Virgin's arms turns towards his mother and blesses her. Other parts of this composition are subordinated to this motif, beginning with the angels who bow to the Virgin to the imitation in grisaille of wood carving on the throne showing prophets carrying scrolls turning in her the direction. They, too, are certainly adopted from the iconography of the "The Prophets from Above" hymn.[49] In other Serbian churches the Virgin was also associated with the Incarnation of Christ. In Dragutin's chapel, Sušica and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, the Mandylion is painted right above the apse, i.e. the figure of the Virgin, as a visual testimony of his Incarnation. Above the Virgin in Gračanica we find Christ Emmanuel, an image of the incarnated Logos, depicted in half-figure and surrounded by seraphim.[50] This iconographic peculiarity is related to the Akathistos of the Virgin which says that Christ sits on cherubim and that Mary is the dwelling place of Him who is above the seraphim.[51] The entire firmament around Emmanuel is studded with stars and golden stars also surround the Virgin in the apse of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos in Thessaloniki. With the story of the star, the gospel text (Mt. 2, 2–10) laid down the basis for the growth and development of a comprehensive symbolism related to the mystery of Christ's birth which is aassociated with Old Testament visions of the star as an image of Christ and that of God resting on cherubim. In Staro Nagoričino, the choice fell on the prophecy of Balaam (Numbers 24, 17) and in Gračanica on that of prophet Isaiah (6, 2–3) which was more adequate for the sanctuary. A troparion based on the vision of Isaiah ("Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory, Hossana on high, blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord") is sung at the beginning of the Anaphora with the deacon taking the asterisk off the diskos and making a sign of the cross above it. Emmanuel is an image of Him who will come, visible to corporeal eyes as a star (Romanos the Melodos) and epitomised by the liturgical asterisk.[52]

The tendency to express the persuasiveness of dogma by translating the words read and sung at church services into images resulted in the appearance of many new and otherwise rarely represented subjects in Byzantine and Serbian art at the close of the XIII and during the first decades of the XIV century. Lections of Old Testament prophetologion read at services designated for the Virgin's and other feasts,



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Gračanica, *Christ Emmanuel and the Virgin in the apse*, 1319–1321

enhanced by adaptations of the same passages adopted from liturgical poetry, influenced the standard form of the scenes represented in the naos and the sanctuary of the church and inspried the depiction of certain Old Testament archetypes in the form of special representations located in various parts of the church. These pictures served to historiate and explain certain subjects, especially those tied to the Incarnation of Christ and his sacrifice. At times, they were also imbued with other messages. Thus, the Sacrifice of Abraham could have both a didactic and an eucharistic meaning, the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace symbolised both the virginity of Mary and the sacrifice of Christ, the Old Testament Tabernacle was as much an image of the Virgin as of the New Church and so forth. In the fresco decoration of the churches raised by king Milutin and the contemporary churches of Byzantium, as well as those of other Orthodox lands, tens of scenes appeared based on Old Testament texts. Some of them were prototypes of Christ's Incarnation and were thus mostly found in churches dedicated to the Virgin: Ljeviška, Gračanica and Chilandar. At the beginning of the XIV century, with the standardisation of the popular corporeal archetypes which enable the perception of God, and the resulting use of Old Testament texts and images as prototypes of the coming of Christ to this earth as the Son of God, a great number of such representations were borrowed from more ancient art. Those tied to the lections and songs related to the feasts of the Virgin and the Nativity were especially beloved.[53] The righteous Jacob is particularly exalted in them, and not only as Christ's ancestor in the flesh. His visions were interpreted as archetypes of the Virgin and as such often represented in painting. This is especially true of his dream vision of a ladder connecting heaven and earth (Genesis 28, 11–17) and his wrestling with an angel (Genesis 32, 24) when he received the Lord's blessing. In Bogorodica Ljeviška, among other subjects related to the Old Testament, these two appear in the exonarthex and in Chilandar they are located in the narthex, on the pendentives of the north dome.[54]

The katholikon of Chilandar was especially rich in Old Testament subjects which heralded the coming of the Messiah and they were all gathered beneath the narthex domes. Some of them are incomplete in iconography and meaning, in particular those in the south-west bay: the visions of prophets Ezekiel (Ezekiel 10, 19) and Isaiah (Isaiah 6, 6–7) in the form of divine inspiration, with cherubim extending to the prophets either a scroll or a spoon full of live coals, as in Ljeviška, or a rare scene of prophet Elisha curing the water with salt (II Kings 2, 20–22).[55] The Fleece of Gideon, Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace and Angel Announcing the Birth of Samson are, however, tied to the conception of the Virgin. The Fleece of Gideon (Judges 6, 36–40) appears also in the Tree of Jesse in Arilje and Bogorodica Ljeviška and, as an independent scene, in the altar space of Gračanica.[56] As opposed to the fresco from Chilandar, the one in Gračanica is more complex because Gideon is represented twice, at the threshing floor and in the act of wringing the dew into the bowl. The fleece represents the Virgin and the dew represents Christ, in the manner in which they are quite explicitly referred to in the verses of services tied to the Nativity, the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple and other feasts. As far as we know, the Angel Announcing the Birth of Samson was painted only in Chilandar. The repainted version of this scene follows the lengthy text from Judges (13, 2–21): we se Manoah and his wife as they bring their offering to the altar with an angel beside them. The angel appears once more, as he ascends to heaven in the flame of the altar after having prophesied to the parents that they shall beget a son. It is well known that Samson is an archetype of Christ for it is said in the Old Testament that he shall be the image of God from his mother's womb and that he shall save the people of Israel. In that sense he is interpreted by John Chrysostomos in his commentary of the Epistle to the Hebrews (7, 27).[57] The scene of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace from Chilandar is a prototype of the Virgin and of her role in the Incarnation of Christ. In a very similar iconographic form this subject also appears in Gračanica, on the west wall of the south parekklesion.[58] The popular comparison of Mary, who remained a virgin although she carried Christ inside her, with the fiery furnace into which the three young Hebrews were cast and remained unharmed (Daniel 3, 1–30), was often repeated in services performed on various occasions and it often influenced the visual arts. The meaning of the picture, however, was not always the same as in Gračanica and Chilandar because the three youths could also be an archetype of Christ's sacrifice, especially when this scene was placed within the sanctuary. It seems possible, therefore, that this was precisely the meaning of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace in the church of St. Nikita near Skoplje. The Old Testament scene of Wisdom Hath Builded Her House in Gračanica (in the sanctuary) and Chilandar (in the narthex) also has a two-fold meaning.[59] In its vicinity in Gračanica is the cycle of the Virgin and

some other Old Testament scenes while in Chilandar we find near it the Virgin enthroned with Christ in her arms and surrounded by angels. We can thus presume that this image can be linked to prophetologion lections from Proverbs 9, 1–16 read on the feasts of the Virgin and around Christmas.[60] It is more probable, however, that the above mentioned examples of this scene from Gračanica and Chilandar represented Old Testament prototypes of the New Church. In a similar manner, the Old Testament Tabernacle (Exodus 40, 1–38) painted on the north wall of the sanctuary of Gračanica can also be interpreted in two different ways: as an archetype of the New Testament Church or as an archetype of Christ's birth, not only because it was believed that Christ united the heavenly tabernacle with the earthly but also because many objects from Moses's tent were considered to be prefigurations of the Virgin, wherefore, in Gračanica, they are decorated with her image in half-figure.[61] Another prototype of the Virgin, the Burning Bush, was introduced to the north wall of the south parekklesion of Gračanica. It looks almost exactly the same as the one in the south parekklesion of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, the only difference being an angel flying from heaven to Moses and explaining to him the meaning of the flaming bush which does not burn. The prophetologion lection describing this event (Exodus 3, 2–8) was read at the feast of the Annunciation and expounded as an archetype of the Virgin in numerous hymns.[62]

The multitude of Old Testament scenes found in king Milutin's churches, painted at the same time as the equally well known scenes of similar contents from Byzantine churches, were directly dependent on lections from relevant texts, usually those tied to the feasts of the Virgin, so that their appearance did not differ much from the descriptions found therein. However, church walls were also decorated with images based on poetry and interpretations of Old Testament scenes seen as an exaltation of the Virgin and new born Christ, such as the Tree of Jesse. There were also illustrations of a poem later named "The Prophets from Above". It was depicted in its entirety in Bogorodica Ljeviška while some of its parts appear in the decoration of Staro Nagoričino and Gračanica. This is a composite representation, based on several sources, whose primary aim was to glorify the prophetic visions which announced the role of the Virgin and the coming of Christ. The basic structure of this composition – the Virgin with Christ surrounded by prophets and archetypes – had certainly existed even in the XII century but it was first represented within a church here, in Ljeviška. In this case, the Virgin with Christ, painted above the entrance to the narthex, is the conceptual centre of the composition. The surrounding arches are decorated with images of twelve prophets carrying inscribed scrolls and depictions of Mary's archetypes beside them. Later examples of this scene show that, as all other hymnographic-liturgical subjects, it, too, had a variable structure, with a changeable choice of both personages and texts written out on their scrolls. On the other hand, Mary's archetypes painted by the prophets were seldom changed so that the door depicted by the figure of Jeremiah in Ljeviška is probably a mistake never to be repeated in the other monuments. In Ljeviška we find a standard choice of prophets whose figures were painted also in other churches of this period, together with the objects through which they heralded the Virgin: Jacob with a ladder, Solomon with the Temple, Aaron with the manna vessel and a rod, Jeremiah (wrongly) with a door, Zechariah with a censer, Zachary with a candlestick, Daniel with a rock, David with the Tabernacle, Moses with the bush, Habakkuk with a boat, Isaiah with an ember bearing cherub and Balaam, the Mesopotamian sorcerer, with a star. The texts on their scrolls are taken either from the Old Testament, more precisely from passages read at church services, or from sacred poetry dedicated to the Virgin.[63]

Another important characteristic of the art of Milutin's era is the emergence of illustrations of subjects based on church poetry written in honour of the Virgin. Although these poems are centuries older and had already been included in festive and other ecclesiastical services long before the XIV century, this is the first time they are rendered in the visual arts. At times poetic works dedicated to the Virgin were illustrated in their entirety. In other instances their influence on certain subjects was so deep that they changed their appearance completely, as attested, for example, by the Dormition of the Virgin in Staro Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva and Gračanica. Moreover, subjects introduced to the iconographic repertoire at that time, such as "The Prophets from Above", the Akathistos of the Virgin or the Christmas hymn, were to remain a part of subsequent programmes of wall paintings. As far as we know, a painted representation of the Akathistos of the Virgin appears for the first time in the fresco decoration of the north parekklesion of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos – the frescoes of the Virgin Olympiotissa near Elasson which include an illustration of this poem are not precisely dated. In Thessaloniki, only a couple of its scenes have been preserved (5–

10 and 14–16).[64] Those illustrating the opening verses literally copy the iconography of the Visitation of Mary and Elisabeth and Joseph Reproaching the Virgin from the cycle of the Virgin (from Gračanica for example), the iconography of the seventh verse is quite similar to the Nativity of Christ although with a somewhat more prominent role assigned to the shepherds to whom the angel announces the good news. Illustrations of the eighth and ninth verses are also similar to the scenes tied to the birth of Christ (the journey of the wise men and their adoration of Christ) represented in the naos of this church. Illustrations of the remaining verses (14–16), more complex in meaning, show Christ Emmanuel, or an enthroned Virgin with Christ, venerated by apostles, angels and clerics.[65]

The same strategy of borrowing parts of already standardised iconographic scenes and inserting them into new compositions based on poetic works was used also in the illustration of the Christmas hymn in Žiča. Although the words inscribed above this scene belong to Anatolios's sticheron "Christ is being born in Bethlehem today", sung at mattins of this feast, and not to that of Damascene, "What shall we offer you, Christ", sung at vespers, the scene painted in Žiča actually numbers among those based on Damascene's poem. Nevertheless, the words of Anatolios's sticheron were certainly not chosen by accident. This poem was sung at mattins on Christmas Day (December 25th) at the moment when the emperor entered the church in Constantinople and, probably, as this scene shows, at the moment the Serbian king entered the church in Žiča. The contents of Anatolios's and Damascene's sticheron are similar,[66] so that the fresco in Žiča is in many respects a copy of an earlier illustration of the sticheron "What shall we offer you, Christ" from the church of the Virgin Peribleptos at Ohrid. However, the composition of the Žiča fresco is clearer, it is divided into two registers and its iconography is based on both poems: the enthroned Virgin with Christ is a motif taken from Anatolios, together with the angels, the shepherds, the wise men and personifications of the Earth and the Desert, although in a different form. The Virgin with Christ is surrounded by a triple ring ("glory") which gives her the semblance of a vision being revealed before the Serbian king, archbishop and their retinue. Christ is turning towards the Virgin in a gesture of benediction because the sticheron of Anatolios places special emphasis on the role of the Virgin in the Incarnation. There is no star because this sticheron does not mention it. Angels rejoice around the circle of light and the personifications of the Earth and the Desert are placed on the same level as the men on earth. The "glory" surrounding the Virgin with Christ rests on the cave and the manger which their two personifications raise above their heads. Meticulous studies of this subject and of the example from Žiča in particular,[67] have shown that its iconography is based on several already existing scenes, more precisely on the Adoration of the Magi and, in part, the Nativity of Christ, with the addition of the processions which took place in churches on Christmas Day. Thus, the individual elements of which the iconography of the Christmas hymn is made are much older but they seem to have been put together in this new composition only in the second half of the XIII century. Although the Serbian milieu was sensitive and quick to react to such important hymnographic-liturgical novelties it was also known to rework the already existing models, even those which were chronologically close (from the Blachernae church in Arta or the Peribleptos in Ohrid), and create its own new iconographic synthesis made up of an illustration of the Christmas hymn and resentations of the sticheron text and the ecclesiastical and royal processions which took place on Christmas mattins.

The Cycle of the Virgin

At the beginning of the XIV century, the theme of the Incarnation which held such a prominent place in Serbian church art, expressed through both Old Testament and scenes based on liturgical poetry, was further enhanced with scenes from the cycle of the Virgin, representations of those events which preceded the birth of Christ and exalted the Virgin as the one chosen among women by the Lord. In a way, they, too, were examples of the ties between the two testaments evoked also at church services. The textual source of this cycle was the Protoevangelion of James while the choice of scenes, along with certain variations in their appearance, was determined by different causes from monument to monument as well as by the adoption of certain elements from Old Testament compositions or even those of pagan origin.[68] The structure and iconography of the cycles we find in the churches of Milutin's time were formulated in XII century art and had undergone only minor changes from then on. It is interesting that in Serbian XIII century painting this cycle was very rare, appearing only in the second half of the century and even then only in the prothesis of Sopoćani and the narthex

of Gradac. It remained just as rare even in the first monuments of king Milutin's time, being painted only in Arilje, reduced only to the representations of the two most significant events, the Birth of the Virgin and Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple. After 1300 this cycle was painted more frequently and in ever more extensive versions. It appeared either in the naos (Sušica, Kraljeva crkva, Chilandar), the parekklesion (Žiča, Staro Nagoričino) or the altar (Gračanica).[69] Although spatial limitations sometimes forced the painters to reduce or abridge the cycle, while in other cases damages of wall surfaces prevent us from viewing it in its entirety, it is clear that all Serbian examples have a common source, probably of Constantinopolitan provenance, because an almost identical cycle, with practically the same choice of scenes and iconography, is found in the Chora whose mosaics are contemporary to Serbian frescoes. In all Serbian churches this cycle begins with the scene showing the refusal of the offerings brought to the Temple by the Virgin's parents. In Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva and Gračanica we also find the scene representing their return from the Temple. The scenes which usually follow are based on the course of the events in question, as they are described in the apocryphal text – the Annunciation to Joachim, the Annunciation to Anne and the Conception of the Virgin. At times the Birth of the Virgin is singled out and, together with the Presentation in the Temple, assumes the most prominent place (in Arilje and Kraljeva crkva), even if this implies changes in the chronological order of the scenes: in Chilandar these two scenes are located in the lateral conchs, in their eastern parts, so that they could always loom before the eyes of the monks gathered in the church, just as in the Protaton of a somewhat earlier date.[70] At the beginning of the XIV century the Birth of the Virgin received a very solemn appearance, filled with a number of details adopted from Constantinopolitan court ritual and certain "genre" elements – the bathing of the new born baby, the figure of Moira weaving the yarn of fate, the crib in which Mary lies with Joachim above it – whose origins go as far back as Hellenistic art. The Virgin Caressed by Her Parents and the Blessings of the Three Priests were inserted between the Birth and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple. Only in Sušica they were also accompanied by the Virgin's First Steps, a scene rarely represented although apparently common in Constantinopolitan art. Yet another exception was made in Sušica where we find the Virgin Receiving the Skein of Purple Wool, a scene which was also represented in the Chora in Constantinople, although in a different compositional form. There, the position of the three priests on the bench is similar to their arrangement in the scene representing the Blessings of the Three Priests. In Sušica, on the other hand, the composition showing the Virgin Receiving the Skein of Purple Wool is almost a literal copy of the scene of Drinking of the Water of Purification, which, incidentally and quite contrary to the usual order of scenes, stands right next to it.[71] Because it includes these two scenes – The First Steps and the Virgin Receiving the Skein of Purple Wool – the choice of scenes in the programme of Sušica differs from that of other contemporary Serbian churches, apparently as a result of emulation of a different model, much more similar to that adopted by the artists of the Chora in Constantinople. Events related to Mary's betrothal and subsequent happenings were not always represented in the same manner, mostly because cycles were abridged, so that in Kraljeva crkva we see the high priest Zachary giving Mary away to Joseph and the scene in which the Virgin drinks the water of purification while in Nagoričino and Gračanica Zachary is shown praying over the rods of the suitors. In these churches, as in Chilandar and Sušica, the cycle has been expanded with scenes of the Annunciation at the Well and Joseph Reproaching the Virgin. It is possible that in Gračanica this cycle continued on in the south parekklesion with scenes which do not usually belong to it (the Annunciation, Visitation and Flight into Egypt) but rather refer to the infancy of Christ, similar to the Chora and some other later monuments where these scenes constitute a sequel to the cycle of the Virgin.[72]

The Great Feasts

There is one group of scenes, usually called the Great Feasts, which is a standard part of the fresco programmes of the churches of Milutin's era. In the beginning, judging by the poorly preserved scenes of this cycle from Petrova crkva, Sušica and Bogorodica Ljeviška and wall paintings of somewhat better condition from Arilje, it looked as if they would endlessly be repeating older models. The distribution of the scenes was mostly based on principles established already in the XII century, except when there was not enough space for the application of this standard model. For example, this was the case in Petrova crkva: fragments of the Annunciation, Entry into Jerusalem and the Crucifixion have been preserved in the space beneath the dome while the Dormition of the Virgin was trans-



48
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Cycle of the Virgin on the south wall*, 1318–1319



49
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Cycle of the Virgin on the north wall*, 1318–1319





50
Sušica, *The Virgin Drinking the Water of Purification and the Virgin Receiving the Skein of Purple Wool*, around 1310

51
Sušica, *Visitation*, around 1310

52
Staro Nagoričino, *Zachary Giving Mary Away to Joseph*, 1315–1317

ferred to the west wall of the narthex. The fragmentarily preserved scenes show that their iconography seems to have held on to the old models. In the scene of the Dormition the Virgin lies in stake with Christ in a mandorla above her. She is surrounded by apostles, bishops and angels flying towards Christ on either side of the bier, just as we see them in Komnenian art. In later examples they descend to the lower zone of the composition and mingle with the apostles.[73] The much better preserved scenes of the Great Feasts from Arilje, located in the sanctuary and





53
Gračanica, *Zachary Praying Over the Rods of the Suitors*, 1319–1321

54
Arilje, *Birth of the Virgin*, 1295/1296

the naos, did not bring any novelties either and their choice of figures was limited to the most indispensable characters. Some rare details such as the cross in the river Jordan in the Baptism scene, the low base in front of the Virgin's bier or remains of clouds with the apostles upon them in the Dormition, were adopted from the art of previous epochs.[74] Old-fashioned solutions are also present in the few still extant scenes of the Great Feasts in Bogorodica Ljeviška. The Dormition, for example, appeared in its traditional guise but, still, did not remain entirely untouched by the new spirit of Byzantine art from around the year 1300. Under the influence of some lost hymnographical work, wings were added to the figure representing the Virgin's soul in Christ's hands. In early

Palaiologan art, moderately open to solutions from more ancient or even pagan art, the soul of the Virgin in the scene of the Dormition was represented in this manner already in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1295), St. Nicholas in Prilep (1298), Žiča, Vatopedi (1312/1313), Kraljeva crkva in Studenica and other monuments.[75]

The scene of the Dormition in Žiča, as in Ljeviška, is a mixture made up of an old scheme and new details. The lower portion of the painting is quite like the forms we have already met, in Arilje, for example. Gathered around the body of the Virgin on her bier are only the apostles, four bishops and Christ holding her soul in his hands, encircled by a mandorla and surrounded by angels. The upper part of the scene is taken up by the apostles floating on clouds, accompanied by angels. However, in the very summit of the composition there is a segment of heaven towards which two angels are carrying the Virgin. The Assumption of the Virgin is first represented only in the age of the Palaiologoi, usually in instances where the scene of the Dormition is already expanded with various episodes such as the discovery of the Virgin's empty tomb or the presentation of her girdle to apostle Thomas. The link between this apostle and the Virgin's assumption to heaven was present already in the earliest examples, on the Suzdal doors (around 1230) and in the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid (1295). In Žiča, however, the figure of Thomas was left out and the Virgin was not depicted in a circular mandorla but only from the waist up and under a triangular, scalloped frame, with arms crossed over on her chest, in the manner in which she is sometimes represented on the bier. Thus, the Assumption of the Virgin from Žiča is one of the earliest examples of representation of this subject the interesting development of which was to continue only in monuments of a slightly later date.[76] Other scenes of the Great Feasts from Žiča should also be examined with great cautiousness because the extent to which they actually repeat the iconography of the older layer of frescoes still remains unclear. Unusual details, adopted from the art of the XIII or early XIV century, appear in some of them. The two figures of pagan rulers in the Pentecost, wearing strange crowns and accompanied by body guards, should be interpreted as personifications of the "tongues", a transitional solution leading to the formulation of the Cosmos that we find in the decoration of Serbian and other Orthodox churches from the XIV to late XVII century. On the other hand, it is almost certain that the Annunciation on the triumphal arch is a copy of the fresco from the first layer of decoration. This is indicated by the fact that the space between the archangel Gabriel and the Virgin is taken up by a figure of Ancient of Days enveloped in a semicircular celestial sphere with a ray of light beaming out of him, once certainly containing a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Similar solutions can be found in XII century monuments and they are based both on the gospels (Matthew 1, 20; Luke 1, 26, 35) and hymnographical interpretations of the presence of the Holy Trinity at the moment of the Annunciation. This idea is clearly expressed in a poem by Andrew of Jerusalem read at the all-night vigil of the feast of the Annunciation: "The Virgin's womb receives the Son".[77] Since this form of the Annunciation does not appear in any of king Milutin's churches, nor in any Byzantine monument of the early XIV century, we believe that, in the course of restoration of Žiča, the Annunciation was modelled after the fresco of the same subject from the older layer of wall paintings.

The most significant changes in the appearance of the Great Feasts occurred in an unusually brief period of time amounting to just five or six years which witnessed the decoration of the churches in Nagoričino, Studenica, Gračanica, Thessaloniki and Chilandar. They coincide with the last works of Michael and Eutychios and some other anonymous painters who transferred into Serbian art much more than just the most successful experiences of the metropoles. In doing so they relied on more ancient solutions while introducing to them elements based on hymnographic-liturgical lections. The standard appearance of the Great Feasts was thus changed, from then on their iconography displayed a new freshness and their meanings became more complex.

The scenes of the Great Feasts from Nagoričino are quite badly damaged but even in that state they show how well the painters were acquainted with the novelties in treating the most significant liturgical cycle and how meticulous they were in applying them. They encircled the Annunciation with images of the prophets Moses and Jacob and prototypes of Christ and the Virgin and accompanied them with appropriate texts. On the other hand, the Nativity of Christ was depicted with numerous details which had become a standard part of this scene already during the XI and XII centuries, such as the Annunciation to Joseph in his sleep (Matthew 2, 13), found in the illumination of gospels and cycles of Christ's Infancy. The preserved remains of the Baptism also disclose a high regard for older models, adapted to the new iconography of the early XIV century. In front of John the Baptist there is a large group of Hebrews to whom he



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Staro Nagoričino, *Dormition of the Virgin*, 1315–1317

56
Staro Nagoričino, *Dormition of the Virgin*, detail, 1315–1317


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57
Žiča, *Dormition of the Virgin*, around 1310

58
Žiča, *Dormition of the Virgin*, detail, around 1310

preached and whom he baptised, a number of young neophytes taking off their clothes and jumping into the water and his disciples, located in the upper left corner of the painting, a motif known also to XI and XII century art. This art is also the source of the antique elements such as the personifications of the Ocean and the river Jordan in the guise of winged figures with crabs' claws in their hair. They were inspired by Psalm 113, 3 read at the service of the feast of Epiphany.[78] The rest of the Great Feasts in Nagoričino are either represented in forms which did not diverge significantly from the standard formulas of late Byzantine art (the Visitation and Entry into Jerusalem) or damaged to such an extent that their original appearance can not be deduced. It is clear, however, that the painters working in Nagoričino did devote a great deal of attention to the scenes of the Great Feasts and that their search for the best models lead them back into the more distant past from which they drew inspiration, enriching it with ideas and tendencies of their own era. In this process the influence of the liturgy was crucial not only as a spiritual incentive but also as the source of literal, poetic quotations which were translated into visual images of new forms.

The painters Michael and Eutychios devised an especially interesting solution, enriched with many new particularities, for the composition of the Dormition in Nagoričino. The standard, static scene is substituted with a representation of a funeral procession in which the Virgin's body is being carried towards her tomb in Gethsemane. Her heavenly assumption is also shown although in a form somewhat different form that seen in Žiča. The Virgin, enveloped by a circular mandorla, is seated on a double blue-coloured rainbow, two angels lift her up towards the gates of heaven while she offers her girdle to apostle Thomas. In a composition never seen before and never repeated again, a series of half-figures of prophets appear on either side of the Virgin, namely Gideon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Moses, Daniel, Balaam, David and Solomon. Each figure points to the Virgin with one hand while holding an inscribed scroll in the other. Adequate Old Testament prototypes of the Virgin are also painted by each prophet. Through the texts on their scrolls and the archetypes which announce her coming, the prophets from Nagoričino exalt the Virgin as Theotokos. In order to show Old Testament annunciations of Christ's coming into this world, the painters of Nagoričino relied upon a model they had already used for the illustration of "The Prophets from Above" hymn located on the east wall





59
Arilje, *Annunciation*, detail: *archangel Gabriel*, 1295/1296

60
Arilje, *Annunciation*, detail: *the Virgin*, 1295/1296

61
Staro Nagoričino, *Annunciation*, detail: *archangel Gabriel*, 1315–1317

62
Staro Nagoričino, *Annunciation*, detail: *the Virgin*, 1315–1317

of the naos of this church, directly below the Annunciation. The form and meaning of this theme were not unknown to them for they had already painted this composition several years earlier, in Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren. Thus, each of the prophets in the Nagoričino Dormition is accompanied by an object usually depicted by his side in illustrations of "The Prophets from Above" while the choice of texts on their scrolls is determined by ancient painters' manuals. In order to understand this mixture of two themes we should call to mind the lections read at sermons delivered on the occasion of the feast of Dormition

which commemorate the role of the Virgin in the Incarnation of Christ, offer a list of her Old Testament symbols and mention the prophets who accompanied Christ when he descended from heaven to take the Virgin's soul into his arms. It seems that a sermon ascribed to Germanos II of Constantinople is particularly important in understanding the Dormition from Nagoričino since some of its lines have almost identical counterparts in this pictorial representation. Moreover, figures of Joseph, Cosmas and John of Damascus, three holy poets, are located directly below this composition – soon, beginning with Kraljeva crkva in Studenica, they were to be depicted alongside the Dormition.[79]

In Kraljeva crkva in Studenica, the iconography of the Great Feasts was not encumbered with the heritage of previous epochs and became even more interesting in form and richer in meaning. Only the Birth of Christ is close to similar works from earlier and early XIV century art. This scene clearly shows the simultaneous presence of four important elements in the formation of the new pictorial image. The gospel text offered the framework for the basic composition of the scene – the Virgin in the cave and Christ wrapped in diapers lying in the manger with the ox and the ass above him and singing angels heralding the good news to the shepherds. The apocrypha offered the figure of Joseph possessed with doubt located at the bottom of the scene. On the other hand, the bathing of Christ is a motif borrowed from antique art. Finally, sticherons sung during Christmas season inspired such motifs as the angel leading the wise men from the East and the Virgin embracing her son. Already in the Protaton (around 1300) Mary was depicted kissing her son the way she does in Studenica. Her cheek is pressed against his while she embraces his head and his body in her arms. Such an embrace is unusual in representations of the Nativity and reminiscent of numerous Byzantine icons depicting the affectionate closeness between Mary and the infant Christ. This tenderness, however, was not modelled after scenes of every-day life. Christmas liturgical rites constantly evoke and intertwine ideas of Christ's birth and his death, his Incarnation and his sacrifice, and are thus associated with the hymns sung during the Holy Week. Holding him in her arms and kissing him, the Virgin recognises in Christ his divine and his human nature, just as she does in the services of Good Friday and Saturday when she laments his death and remembers the times when she embraced and kissed him as a child. It is therefore not surprising that images tied to the Nativity became iconographically close to those greatly influenced by sermons and hymns sung at services of the Easter season, above all to the Lamentation and the Anapeson. Such loans worked both ways: the embracing of Christ from Studenica is related to the Virgin's lamentation of her dead son, the diapers are an image of the cloth in which his lifeless body was going to be wrapped, the shape of the manger is reminiscent of the sarcophagus into which the dead Christ was going to be laid.[80] The rest of the Great Feasts from Studenica also match the most progressive solutions of Palaiologan art. Although simplified at times, they are always in the spirit of the new age. A good example is the Descent into Hades which is very similar to that painted in the Chora in Constantinople, the church of the Saviour in Veria, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos in Thessaloniki and even some older monuments. Here, too, the Dormition of the Virgin was the subject of great attention which resulted in an almost complete change in the appearance of this scene. Although the central part of the composition is damaged, it is easy to notice that this is basically a copy of the scene painted in Nagoričino, although with a more compact structure and stripped of some of its hymnographic-liturgical additions. Here, too, the Virgin lying on the bier carried on the shoulders of the apostles takes central stage. Above is the figure of Christ receiving into his arms the winged soul of his mother, as in Ljeviška and Žiča, and handing it to an angel so that it may be taken to heaven, the gates of which are being opened by two other angels. In the upper register, the apostles arrive to Jerusalem riding on clouds. Surrounding the bier is a host of angels as well as figures of the apostles, the women of Jerusalem and the first bishops, while the Gethsemane tomb appears on the right hand side, just as in Nagoričino. Judging by the angel returning the sword to its sheath, the damaged part of the fresco once held the figure of Euphonios who tried to desecrate the death bed and had his hands cut off in punishment. Thus, we find that in Studenica, too, the death of the Virgin was linked with the translation of her body to Gethsemane. There are also some new details. It is obvious that the number of textual sources for this scene, both in Nagoričino and in Studenica, had increased. The homilies of Pseudo-John the Theologian, St. Meletios and John of Thessaloniki were still the most significant among them although they were now joined by sticherons dedicated to the Virgin written by many other Byzantine poets. They comprised a synaxarion read on August 15th and it seems that this particular collection of texts served as the source upon which the new image

of the Dormition was based. Moreover, the fact that four holy poets, a heritage of Komnenian art, were represented around the Dormition carrying scrolls inscribed with their verses celebrating the Virgin proves that the appearance of this scene depended also on hymns describing in detail the events related to the death of the Virgin.[81]

Such a high degree of attention devoted to the Dormition is not surprising because at that very time, around the year 1300, this feast had become especially popular. By special imperial decree the entire month of August was dedicated to it because – as emperor Andronikos II explains his decision – a few days time was not enough to celebrate the Virgin, her Dormition and assumption to heaven. The importance of this feast in the lives of ordinary people and early XIV century monastic services was especially strongly felt in art. The image of this feast received a prominent place in church interiors, its iconography grew in complexity, details were multiplying and inspiration for new forms was found in old apocryphal, homilitic and poetic texts which were already a part, either in excerpts or paraphrases, of the services related to the death of the Virgin. It is beyond doubt that Constantinople was the focal point of this cult because it prided itself in possessing the relics of its famous guardian. Special veneration of the Virgin spread from Constantinople to all parts of the Orthodox world. In Russia (the Suzdal doors), Ohrid (Virgin Peribleptos), Mistra (Aphendiko, 1311–1322) and Serbia (Nagoričino, Kraljeva crkva, Gračanica) the standard composition of the scene changed through the introduction of the funeral procession carrying the body of the Virgin to her tomb, her assumption towards the open gate of heaven, the positioning of candlesticks around the bier and the appearance of large groups of personages, angelic hosts and a series of other details.[82]

The Dormition of the Virgin in Gračanica is an interesting mixture of iconographic novelties already seen in the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid and Kraljeva crkva in Studenica. The central part of the composition is very similar to the Studenica fresco with special additions grouped around it, as in the mentioned Ohrid church, so that the representation of this feast actually turns into a small cycle of scenes dedicated to the events related to Mary's death. It opens up with the Virgin's prayer in the garden and continues with her farewell from the apostles. The central composition includes both the death of the Virgin and the translation of her body: the bier is carried by four apostles, the others walk ahead, and the procession ends with the women of Jerusalem. Behind the bier is Christ with his mother's soul in his hands, surrounded by a multitude of angels and a number of other details known from the Studenica fresco. The procession is heading for the open tomb flanked by figures of women gesturing in sorrow and lamentation. The heavenly assumption of the Virgin is shown as a separate episode rendering the moment in which she gives her girdle to Thomas while the other apostles stand down below, leaning over the empty tomb. The final scene depicts Thomas showing the girdle to the apostles. Representations of all these events are based on the sources which had already been woven into the Studenica fresco only now they are used more thoroughly in order to create separate episodes. Without an awareness of the close relations of the visual image with apocryphal and liturgic-hymnographical texts, the numerous particularities of the Dormition in Gračanica remain unintelligible: during her prayer, the trees bend towards the Virgin in veneration, the translation of the Virgin's body has all the characteristics of the translation of the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant, her bier is carried by the four evangelists and surrounded by angles singing praises to her while the procession ends with the women of Jerusalem, as suggested by St. John of Damascus. In this sermon Damascene cites Psalm 131, i.e. the song of the translation of the Ark, and says that the Virgin is actually the Ark of the Lord carried on the shoulders of the celebrated apostles. Scenes tied to the heavenly Assumption of the Virgin and the bestowal of her girdle upon Thomas, the discovery of her empty tomb and the presentation of the girdle are also based on apocrypha and commemorated in church services of the season around August 15th. There is good reason to assume that the Dormition from Gračanica, as well as those from Nagoričino and Studenica, have their origins in Constantinople. Namely, the cult of the Virgin's relics was highly developed in that city and it should be kept in mind that the decoration of the Suzdal doors on which we find the first renderings of the Translation of the Virgin's Body, her Assumption to Heaven and the Bestowal of the Girdle upon Thomas also include a scene of Depositing the Maphorion of the Virgin in the church of the Blachernae in Constantinople.[83]

Representations of two Great Feasts, the Dormition and the Descent into Hades, have nothing to do with gospel texts. Drawing inspiration from numerous lections read during the Easter season and around August 15th, in the Serbian milieu these two scenes were treated in an especially interesting manner. They assumed the most prominent and distinct locations in church interiors and their iconography was almost





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Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Nativity*, 1318–1319

64
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Descent into Hades*, 1318–1319

unique in the contemporary art of the Orthodox world. In Gračanica, the Descent into Hades is located on the east wall of the naos, above the triumphal arch, and displays quite an unusual composition. Its summit is taken by the Hetoimasia approached on either side by a group of angels, some dressed as deacons carrying rhypidia and labarums inscribed with the opening words of the Trisagion hymn. The sky above and around Christ is studded with golden stars while he himself descends into Hades holding the cross in one and pulling up Adam with the other hand. Behind Adam are many figures of Old Testament righteous and opposite him we find Eve, John the Prodromos and Old Testament kings. Christ

is trampling on the defeated Hades while angels are breaking down the gates of hell and tying him down with chains. The terrible torments of the souls in Hades are depicted at the very bottom of the composition. The literary sources of this scene lie above all in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus as well as in liturgical poetry and homilies. The liturgical concept of this image of the Resurrection from Gračanica is indicated by the Hetoimasia and the angles officiating around it. The services of the Easter season are full of testimonies of Christ's redeeming mission performed through his paschal sacrifice and his descent into Hades: Christ is the new holy Paschal Lamb which opened the gates of heaven for mankind and, in his sermon delivered on Good Saturday, St. Epiphanios of Cyprus quotes these words with which Christ addressed the righteous upon his descent into Hades: "Arise and exist out of here, from darkness into eternal light... The Cherubic Throne is prepared and those who are rising are mighty and ready". The Hetoimasia with *instrumenta martirii*, depicted as a part of the composition of Descent into Hades in Gračanica, is neither the first nor the only example of this motif. It appeared previously in compositions displaying a more pronounced influence of liturgical texts. Thus, in a XII century manuscript from Paris (Paris. gr. 550), angels bearing *instrumenta martirii* appear in the upper part of a Resurrection scene painted by the text of the Paschal Sermon of St. Gregorios of Nazianzus. During the XIV century this motif is present also in other representations of this scene and, apart from Gračanica, in yet another church raised by Milutin – that of Chilandar. Another novelty offered by this fresco from Gračanica are the stars surrounding Christ. As symbols of celestial and eternal light they became exceptionally important in XIV century art. Having destroyed death, Christ enlightened all men with the divine splendour of his resurrection, through him all creation has been illuminated and he himself called upon the righteous to rise from hell saying "Exit into the light" (services of Good Saturday). The painter working in Gračanica recreated this light by painting a light blue halo around Christ with golden stars all around him.[84]

The expansion of the Dormition scene in Gračanica with episodes leading up to or following the main event was not accidental but a part of the procedure followed by artists of the early XIV century in the process of bringing the visual image even closer to the textual sources. This is further attested by representations of other Feasts in Gračanica and some other churches, too. In Gračanica, the Transfiguration is surrounded by two other scenes, in the function of prologue and epilogue, namely the arrival of Christ with the apostles and their descent from Mount Tabor. The Raising of Lazarus also has an appendix in the form of Christ's arrival to Bethany and his encounter with the sisters of Lazarus while the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem includes the episode of finding the she-donkey. With origins rooted in Komnenian art, such extensions of standard compositions of the Great Feasts became a trade mark of Palaiologan and Serbian church art. Thus, in Sušica and Prochor of Pčinja, a Visitation scene was added to the Annunciation to Mary, a separate composition of Adoration of the Magi was painted by the Nativity in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos of Thessaloniki while in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim the Gračanica version of Raising of Lazarus was further devolved into as much as three episodes: the arrival of Christ and the apostles, Christ's encounter with Martha and Mary and the raising of Lazarus. Thus, with the visual image following the text quite literally, word for word, this concept approaches the manner of tetraevangelion illumination encountered in older manuscripts.[85]

The badly damaged scenes of the Great Feasts in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim are also indicative of the measure of departure of Serbian painting of Milutin's age from standard solutions, certainly under the influence of liturgical texts and rites. In its own way, this also expresses the efforts of numerous artists of the early XIV century to conform the visual image to the complex liturgy and services of some particularly significant days of the church calendar. As in other art forms of this age, this process entailed adopting any element of more ancient art applicable to the new picture as much as excepting the experiences of contemporaries. Also, new and different solutions were devised, practically unique in medieval art. Apart from the old-fashioned manner of painting a series of episodes (the Raising of Lazarus), scenes were also expanded through the inclusion of half-figures of prophets, literally copied from Komnenian or even older art. The words inscribed on their scrolls recalled prophetologion lections read on certain feasts. The assiduity with which this was performed was not going to be repeated in the decoration of any other endowment of king Milutin. Only a fragment of the Dormition has survived in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim, but even that much is enough to demonstrate that here, too, contemporary solutions, with the Virgin lifted up to heaven by angels, were accepted. It seems that the Descent into Hades was composed in a manner similar to that found in Stude-



65
Gračanica, *Descent into Hades*, 1319–1321

66
Gračanica, *Story of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*, 1319–1321

nica or Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, with Christ pulling Adam and Eve up with both hands so that the cross is now transferred into the hands of an angel standing above him. A significant place on this fresco from the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim was reserved for John the Prodromos who preaches to the righteous in Hades. This is a well known apocryphal episode, evolved and enhanced in the sermons and poems of Good Friday. On the other hand, the Transfiguration of Christ from this church indicates that the Serbian milieu took part in the original Hesychastic discourses regarding the light of Tabor, at least in the part referring to the dilemma whether what the apostles saw was only Christ surrounded by the Divine Light or also Moses and Elijah who were in it. One should recall here that, at the beginning of his charter issued to Gračanica, king Milutin unexpectedly speaks of the light of Tabor, a phenomenon which may have been reflected in the Transfiguration scene in that church where we find Christ wearing a white robe and encircled by a blue mandorla while another light blue arch encircles the two prophets. The same treatment is present in the work of painters who decorated with frescoes the church of Sts. Peter and Paul. They painted both the cloud of light seen by the apostles, through which it is possible for men to perceive "the glory of our Lord", as well as the Divine Light surrounding Christ, invisible to the material eyes of the body. The painters formulated this composition mostly by calling into mind sacred poetry chanted at the feast of the Transfiguration, in particular the antephones sung during the liturgy, which exalt God whom "the angels serve with fear and tremor" in his dwelling. Probably under the influence of such verses chanted at vespers of this feast, two figures of angels on clouds appear at the summit of the composition, both rendered in grisaille because they are invisible to the human eye. Such a fusion of visual images and words of liturgical services was even more influential in changing the appearance of the Ascension of Christ painted on the vault of the sanctuary of this church. Open gates of heaven and two cherubim appear above Christ lifted in a mandorla by four angels. A throne with Ancient of Days is shown in a circular opening and right next to it is the "prepared throne" or the Hetoimasia. The dove of the Holy Spirit hovers between Christ and Ancient of Days. The uncommon solution of the upper part of the Ascension was inspired by the Psalms, homilies of church fathers (St. John Chrysostomos, Cyril of Turov, John the Presbyter and others) and songs chanted on the occasion of this feast. Almost all these texts were included in the service of the Ascension, composed certainly by the end of the IX century. However, it was only at the beginning of the XIV century that they were transposed into a liturgically learned visual image and its complex iconography.[86]

All this goes to show how open Serbian art of the first decades of the XIV century was to the new iconography, even in the case of such standardised scenes as the Great Feasts. Probably as a result of the activities of the learned archbishops, bishops and hegumenoi and the skilled painters, able to instil new meanings and enrich the old and familiar compositions with new forms, Serbian art of king Milutin's time produced several very interesting solutions for the scenes of the Great Feasts. In these representations, an older stratum inherited from Komnenian and XIII century art is easy to distinguish, because it offers the familiar framework of the scenes, from the novelties of Palaiologan painting. In creating new images of scenes it was customary to adopt motifs wich already existed in the form of autonomous episodes (the translation of the Virgin's body, for example) or representations found within the framework of other themes. They were inserted into compositions of different structures, almost unique in medieval art, such as the Dormition in Nagoričino, the Ascension and Transfiguration in the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim or the Descent into Hades in Gračanica. The emengence of interesting solutions such as these should not necessarily always be associated with the names of specific painters. For example, in the work of Michael and Eutychios, the Feasts appear in different guises in each church they decorated. Moreover, those from St. Nikita near Skoplje, their last work, are closer to the scenes painted by some of their anonymous contemporaries in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos or the works of Georgios Kalliergis from Veria than to the Feasts of Nagoričino, Studenica and Gračanica, not to mention their first works. Therefore, such solutions could best be understood as a manifestation of a specific current in late medieval art to be revived, in a way, around the middle of the XIV century.

The Cycle of Liturgical Gospel Lections

Representations of Christ's miracles, his sermons and parables have been preserved in several of Milutin's churches and best of all in Staro Nagoričino, Gračanica, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos and St. Nikita. Those from Bogorodica Ljeviška are quite badly damaged. In St. Prochor of Pčinja and Chilandar they



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Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim, *Ascension*, 1319–1320

were later covered with a new layer of paintings and have, to date, been only partly cleaned. As a part of a wider phenomenon in Byzantine art of the Palaiologan era, these scenes, which appeared in the naos and were the subject of an especially large number of liturgical lections read from Pentecost to Lent, enhanced the image of Christ's redeeming mission on earth through the story of his miracles and teachings delivered before the apostles, the pharisees and the people.

The choice and order of the scenes depended on gospel pericopes read after the Pentecost and lections from the Pentecostarion read between Easter and the Pentecost so that their numbers and appearances were quite variable.[87] The remains of this cycle in Bogorodica Ljeviška indicate that other texts read at church services could also serve as the basis of certain images. Such is the case with a rarely represented scene showing the purchase of myrrh with which the sinner is going to anoint the feet of Christ, described extensively in a sticheron sung at services of Wednesday of the Holy Week.[88] In churches of modest dimensions only the scenes related to the miraculous healings of Christ were represented: in St. Prochor of Pčinja (in which the more recent layer of frescoes dating from 1488/9 undoubtedly copies the original paintings from the beginning of the XIV century) four such healings were depicted, just as in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos.[89] However, in Nagoričino, Gračanica and St. Nikita their number is much larger and the scenes are much more diverse. In Nagoričino, Michael and Eutychios created a series of compositions, distributed one beneath the other, representing the events which were the subject of lections read between Easter and the Pentecost – the miracles of Christ and his resurrection appearances. They opened the first cycle with the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law, as they were to do again, a while later, in St. Nikita, and went on from there, following the order of the Pentecostarion lections, with the Healing of the Blind from Birth, Healing of the Paralytic and Christ and the Samaritan Woman. These scenes also assumed a prominent place in the decoration of St. Prochor of Pčinja and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos. However, further on in the naos and on the north wall of the sanctuary the choice of illustrated gospel lections from the season following the Pentecost was more liberal. Yet, the painters were careful to detach those underlining Christ's teachings and referring to the Jerusalem Temple (Christ Teaching in the Temple, Mid-Pentecost and Purification of the Temple) from those which point out the importance and power of faith: "Be like this child", the Healing of the Woman with an Issue of Blood, the Healing of the Man with the Water Disease, the Parable of the Foolish and the Wise Virgins, Christ in the House of Martha and Mary and the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee.[90]

The painters working in Gračanica, probably Michael and Eutychios again, relied on the same method. They linked some scenes to the Feasts with which they are associated for example, the scene in which Christ warns the apostles not to tell what they saw on Mount Tabor is painted right next to the Transfiguration; Christ Teaches in Judea is depicted by the Raising of Lazarus because these events follow one another (John 11, 7). The link between the Old and the New Church is emphasised through the choice of scenes painted below the Pentecost: "Peter, you are the rock", Peter and Ananias, Christ Teaching in the Temple, Christ Questioning the Apostles about Himself and Christ's Lectures about the True Faith. Scenes of this type are also located on the south wall beneath the dome where we find the compositions of "Be like this child", Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, Christ Tells the Hebrews How to Find Salvation, Christ Preaches About the End of the World and Christ and the Adulteress. All these scenes include the idea of preparation of mankind for salvation, revealed in the teachings or parables of Christ. The two final scenes, the Foolish and the Wise Virgins and the Publican and the Pharisee, are located as close as possible to the Descent into Hades, certainly not by accident. Meanwhile, the frescoes on the west wall are again tied to the Temple of Jerusalem and the founding of the New Church (Mid-Pentecost and Purification of the Temple). Below them are scenes based on Triodion lections: Christ and the Samaritan Woman, Healing of the Blind from Birth, Healing of the Paralytic and Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee (i.e. the sinner who washed the feet of Christ). They continue on in the west (Healing of the Man with the Water Disease) and east part of the naos (only the Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand has been preserved). Several scenes related to these liturgical readings are represented also in the south parekklesion.[91]

In the church of St. Nikita the scenes of this cycle were not grouped the same way and did not follow the sequence of liturgical gospel lections. Yet, it is characteristic that they were all organised into a sequence spreading across the walls and the piers in a single string of compositions. The first scene of this sequence, Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law, is located on the south wall of the diaconicon while the Wedding at Cana and Purification of the Temple re-



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Gračanica, *Purification of the Temple*, 1319–1321



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Chilandar, Katholikon, *Mid-Pentecost, Healing of the Woman with a Spirit of Infirmity* (detail) *and the Widow's Mite*, 1320–1321

ceived places of honour on the west and the north wall. Representations of Christ's sermons were utterly scarce – in the space beneath the dome there are only two, Christ Teaching in the Temple is depicted in the west bay, Christ in the House of Martha and Mary is located close to the prothesis, Mid-Pentecost and another indecipherable scene appear by the iconostasis.[92] The south pier by the iconostasis displays one of Christ's sermons delivered to the apostles, probably that which is represented in the same spot in the katholikon of Chilandar.

In that church this scene is easily identified, owing to the partly preserved inscription (Matthew 13, 36–40), and in its proximity, on the south wall and in the choir, there are representations of several other scenes depicting Christ teaching the apostles and the Hebrews. The choice of Christ's teachings and sermons represented in the north-west corner of the naos is based on Lent lections, namely the story of the marriage feast of the king's son and that of the publican and the pharisee, followed by Christ's sermon to the apostles about the child as the model of the pure and immaculate soul and Christ's cursing of the fruitless fig tree, all according to gospel lections read on Monday of the Holy Week. The choice of scenes in Chilandar was also influenced by gospel lections from the Pentecostarion, as attested by the frescoes in the west part of the church. The following scenes were depicted there, one by another: Christ and the Samaritan Woman, Christ and Zacchaeus, Healing of the Paralytic and Miracle with the Blind. In Chilandar, numerous other scenes of this cycle, based on Sunday lections, refer to the miraculous healings of Christ. They are mostly concentrated in the south-west part of the naos while several representations appear also on the north wall and in the choirs.[93]

The visual representation of Christ's redeeming mission on earth, extensively expounded in Serbian religious painting, through which he directed his disciples and the people towards the road of salvation and pointed out the models of true faith, was a part of a broader phenomenon in late Byzantine art. A series of monuments from around the year 1300 contained such representations: St. Sophia in Trebizond, the Metropolis and Aphendiko in Mistra, St. Euthymios and St. Catherine in Thessaloniki, the Chora in Constantinople and many other churches where they appeared in much smaller numbers. The custom of creating tightly packed sequences of scenes of this type was inherited from XII century art, as attested by the mosaics of Monreale on Sicily and the frescoes in Mirož near Pskov.[94] The impulse for their reemergence was the result of a stricter observance of liturgical lections of the gospels read throughout the year. However, since these texts offered a large number of themes, the painters usually made particular choices among them so that the total number and sequence of scenes vary from church to church. Serbian churches of this era, as well as those Byzantine churches in which this cycle has been more closely studied (the Protaton, St. Euthymios in Thessaloniki, the Chora in Constantinople), indicate that the liturgically most significant scenes were predominant. Apart from the already mentioned fact that gospel lections read between Easter and the Pentecost, along with the readings which single out the events of Christ's life which took place in the Galilee, as opposed to those which happened in Judea and Jerusalem, were of crucial importance in the grouping of scenes, Serbian examples indicate that the choice of some scenes depended on the identity of the feast in the vicinity of which they happened to be represented. In that manner the idea of the New Temple was doubly emphasised through the choice of scenes surrounding the Entry into Jerusalem, Crucifixion or the Pentecost while the meaning of the eschatological themes tied to the Descent into Hades was deepened. We can thus conclude that in Serbian churches – as elsewhere, for that matter – these images did not follow strictly the order in which they were evoked at church services but were, rather, grouped according to the meaning imposed on them by the location which they assumed in a church interior. Hence, subjects rendering the teachings of Christ were placed closer to the sanctuary while those evoked at services from Lent until Easter – the parables and some rare scenes such as Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee or Christ Cursing the Fig-Tree – were located in the west part of the church, the spot which had always been and still was, at the beginning of the XIV century, reserved for representations related to these movable feasts. Being consistent in placing representations of Christ's public ministry in the church naos (St. Prochor of Pčinja, Nagoričino, Gračanica, Chilandar, St. Nikita), Serbian painting took on a conspicuously liturgical character and joined the most progressive current of Byzantine art. On the other hand, compared to the contemporary images found in Byzantine art, especially those from Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Mistra, there are no significant peculiarities in the iconography of these scenes.

The Cycle of Christ's Passion

Events tied to the passion of Christ, from the moment of his last Passover with his disciples to the

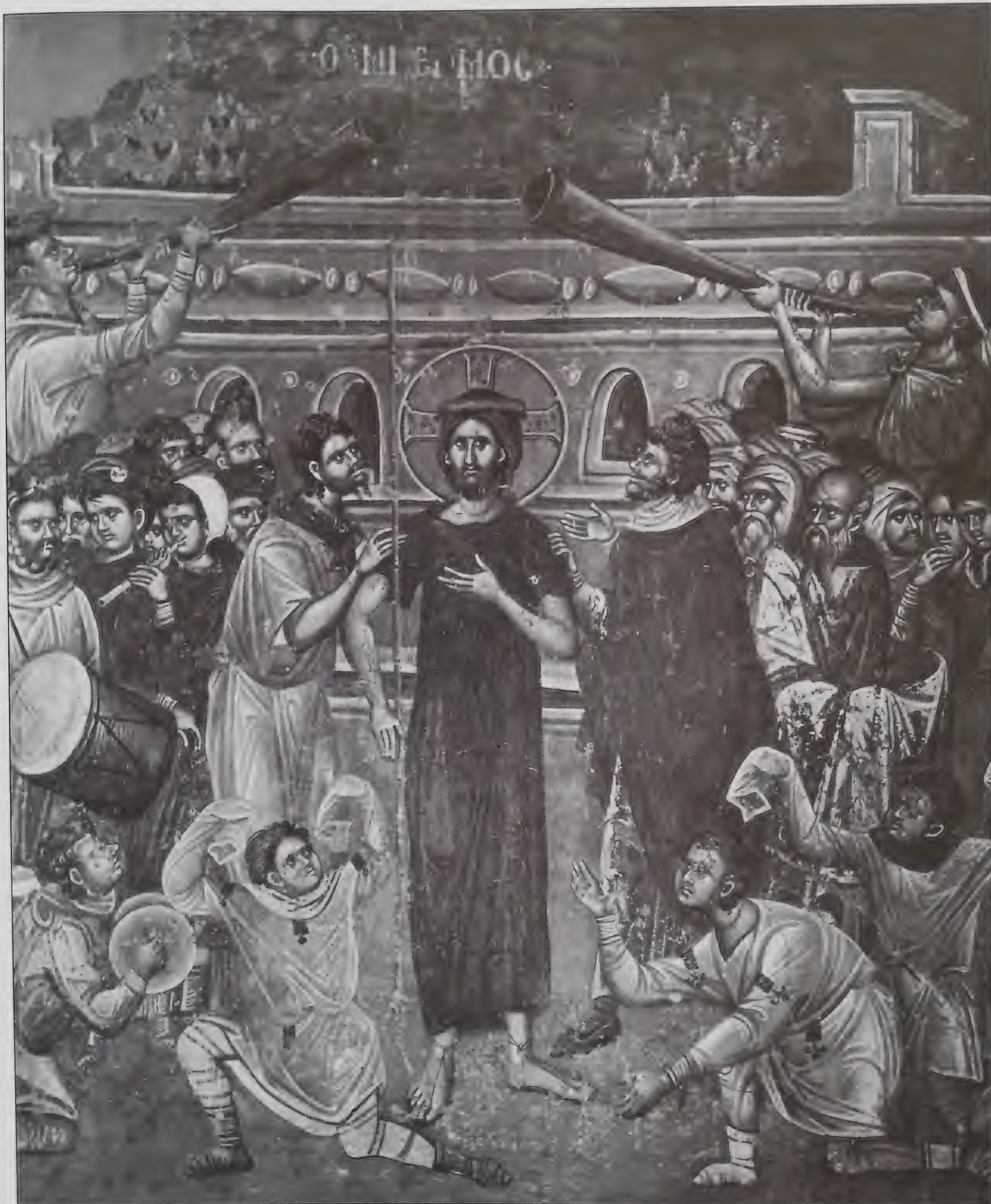


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Staro Nagoričino, *Healing of the Man with the Water Disease*, 1315–1317

entombment, were represented in almost all of king Milutin's churches. This is not surprising because the theme of Christ's Passion was always popular in Byzantine art, especially during the Komnenian period whence it was adopted and further developed in Palaiologan times, certainly under a direct influence of the liturgy. During the XI and XII centuries, namely, the Palestinian rite, known to be a receptacle of numerous homilies and sacred poems related to this subject, was finally formulated and widely diffused. The importance of the Passion scenes in the programmes of church decoration brought about not only a sudden multiplication of the number of such representations but also a migration of these scenes from the narthex (where they were ordinarily placed in earlier times) to the naos and, at times, even the sanctuary. Only in those churches in which XIV century frescoes repeated older paintings, above all in Peć and the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim, this cycle remained in the narthex. Such an advance of these scenes towards the sanctuary was certainly influenced by some of the liturgical rites of the Holy Week.[95]

Because of the varying, not always favourable state of preservation of the frescoes in different churches, the relation of the cycle of Christ's Passion to Passion lections is not always entirely clear but there can be no doubt that these lections always lie at their foundation. Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper, Christ's washing of the feet of the apostles, his prayer on the Mount of Olives and the betrayal of Judas. Because of the liturgical significance of these events and their importance for the future Church of Christ, in Serbian churches, as elsewhere, the Last Supper stood at the opening of the cycle, usually located in the sanctuary, close to the scene representing the Communion of the Apostles: in Bogorodica Ljeviška, Prochor of Pčinja, Nagoričino, Chilandar and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos.[96] The order of the scenes which followed was usually based on the sequence of gospel lections read at the liturgy of Maundy Thursday: the Washing of the Feet, possibly, as in Nagoričino and St. Nikita, with the addition of Christ Lecturing the Apostles on Humility – in accordance with the pericope from John (13, 3–17) read on that occasion,[97] the Agony in the Garden, Judas Taking the Pieces of Silver (in Nagoričino) and the Betrayal of Judas. The service of the Passion lections was created through an intertwining of texts so that, as a result, the chronological order of the scenes was accordingly disrupted. This principle was observed without exception by the artists who thus represented Christ being tried before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod in Nagoričino and Gračanica and, in those two churches, a separate scene showing Christ being turned over to the Hebrews. In Gračanica we also find Peter's trifold denial of Christ. In some cases the scene of Mocking of Christ is also included in this cycle. A somewhat more liberal choice of gospel texts resulted either in the inclusion or the exclusion of certain scenes related to the Golgotha and the death of Christ. Thus, the Road to Calvary, the Raising of the Cross or the Ascent of and the Descent from the Cross appeared everywhere. It seems that the painters of Peć and Chilandar were the only ones to represent Christ in front of the Cross while those from Nagoričino and Gračanica also added the Crucifixion. In Nagoričino and Gračanica Michael and Eutychios followed the texts read on Good Friday even more closely than their contemporaries and included into this cycle the scene of Joseph asking Pilate for the body of Christ in order to bury it. The painters of Chilandar also added the rarely represented Preparation of the Sepulchre. The cycle usually ended with the Entombment while in Gračanica and Chilandar there is also the Lamentation. This was also the last scene of the cycle in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos and St. Nikita and the only one not based on gospel texts.[98]

The iconography of almost all mentioned scenes was based on earlier solutions known from the art of the XI and XII centuries.[99] The Last Supper, in the composition which finally prevailed, included Christ at the head of the table at once dispensing blessings with his raised hand and establishing the sacrament of the Eucharist. The architecture behind him is there to represent the room on Zion in which this event took place. The speed and thoroughness with which the new iconography spread is attested also by the Washing of the Feet, a scene in which "genre" elements, with the apostles untying their sandals in the foreground, became common. The Agony in the Garden also followed the standard models of early Palaiologan art, with Christ in prayer and angles encouraging him while the foreground is usually taken by the dormant apostles. The meticulous observance of the texts and the order of the Passion lections is reflected in the representation of some episodes as separate scenes, previously, although rarely, inserted into already formulated compositions, or in the enrichment of the already standard images. And, because the iconography of the scenes found in the different monuments is quite similar, we are inclined to believe that the artists working in Serbia used as a framework a basic redaction of the cycle and its iconography already formulated elsewhere. Apart from the usual motifs, the



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Staro Nagoričino, *Mocking of Christ*, 1315–1317





Betrayal of Judas in Gračanica is expanded with the figures of the fleeing apostles and soldiers brought from the city by Judas, elements seen also in other contemporary monuments. Several years earlier, in Nagoričino, the motif of Judas taking the pieces of silver was singled out and made into a special scene. In St. Nikita even the death of Judas may have been represented – should we, of course, believe the painters who repainted parts of the earlier fresco decoration in 1483/1484. Closely observing the gospel text, artists of the early XIV century worked patiently on all the trials that Christ was brought to as well as on the moment when Pilate turned the convicted Christ over to the Hebrews, but the iconography of their scenes was based on much older models, con-

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Čučer, St. Nikita, *Last Supper*, around 1320

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Staro Nagoričino, *Last Supper*, 1315–1317



veying the look of the Hebrew court house, the Roman praetorium and adopting some elements from imperial iconography. Christ's prosecutors are dressed as Byzantine emperors and accompanied by groups of bodyguards while the high priests are encircled by candle-bearers, counsellors and notaries sitting around tables with pieces of parchment on which the verdict is going to be written. In Gračanica, the conference of the centurions with the Hebrews after the resurrection of Christ, in order to keep the bribed soldiers quiet about the event, is singled out in the form of a separate scene while in Peć the Trial Before Annas is expanded with a scene showing the pharisees engaged in lively discussion around a table covered with opened books inscribed with unintelligible letters con-

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Gračanica, *Lamentation*, 1319–1321

75
Čučer, St. Nikita, *Lamentation*, around 1320



veying the idea of Hebrew "books of the Law". Apart from this almost archaeologically precise description of the courtroom proceedings, other details, previously rarely represented, were also introduced into this scene. They were not always inspired by gospel texts. A case in point, for example, is the figure of Pilate's wife appearing behind her husband in Nagoričino, at the moment he pronounces the verdict, and on the right side of the same scene in Gračanica. In Peć she stands at the window of the praetorium building. In Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos a servant whispers her message into Pilate's ear. The Mocking of Christ in Nagoričino displays an even greater number of reminiscences of apocryphal writings and religious drama.

Together with such unexpected forms, in those days painting was also influenced by apocryphal texts which enriched the descriptions found in the gospels and fitted easily into an art which was fond of colourful storytelling. The Road to Calvary, the Ascent of the Cross in Nagoričino (as in Gračanica), as well as the adjacent Crucifixion and Descent from the Cross, include the figures of the apostle John and the Virgin, hiding behind a hill. The gospels speak only briefly of the role Mary and John played in the last Passions of Christ so that their introduction to these scenes should be regarded as a result of influences of other sources. Namely, one version of the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus does actually mention that the

apostle John and the Virgin followed the group of convicts to the Golgotha. Therefore, this, or some other similar apocryphal text, must have been used by an anonymous author as the basis for an unusual dramatisation of Christ's Passion (Palat. gr. 367) in which the Virgin is introduced to the procession following Christ and her pain before the sight of her son on the cross described in detail. Inspired by the Gospel of Luke (23, 27–31), the scene showing Christ addressing the women of Jerusalem on his way to the Golgotha entered Byzantine art at an early stage of its development and survived until the days of Arilje and Chilandar. However, in that scene and the Ascent of the Cross the figures of Mary and John hiding behind a hill make their first appearance in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid and the Protaton (around 1300). Painters working in Serbia at that time follow these examples. Obviously, the common model, formulated in some centre of artistic creation not known to us today, produced several identical solutions. Its influence is also felt in a partly preserved scene from Peć which renders Christ before the cross, an episode otherwise rarely represented in Serbian art. In an incomplete version (without the cross) it appears around this time in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos while in Chilandar we see it in its standard form. On the repainted fresco from Chilandar there is no other figure behind Christ so that the identity of the person he is addressing remains vague. In Peć, on the other hand, this scene is complete because Christ turns towards the Virgin and the apostle John standing by his side, an element adopted from the Road to Calvary as seen, for example, in the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid and the already mentioned Serbian churches.[100]

Other scenes and iconographic particularities related to the services of the Holy Week also appear in the fresco decoration of king Milutin's churches. Thus, in the partly preserved Last Supper in Žiča Judas is painted with a darkened halo and in the Virgin Peribleptos with a barely traced outline of a halo. This could be a reflection of the verses of the triodion by Andrew of Crete chanted at the services of Maundy Thursday.[101] In those days the Lamentation was depicted several times despite the fact that it is not mentioned in the gospels. Its ties with the liturgy can be observed with reliability from the XI century on, from the time the homily of Georgios of Nicomedia dedicated to the Lamentation of Christ, the kontakion of St. Romanos the Melodos "Let us come and praise", the Lament of the Virgin and a series of other songs were introduced to the services of Good Friday and Saturday before Easter. Their influence should account not only for the emergence but also for the particularly rich iconography of the Lamentation in Gračanica, Chilandar and other Serbian monuments.[102] Moreover, at the beginning of the XIV century, the translation of words into visual images resulted in the creation of new compositions with a very pronounced liturgical character. The mentioned texts read or sung on Friday and Saturday before Easter, as well as the texts of Gabriel the Monk, Mark and Cosmas and the homilies of Epiphanios and Gregorios of Antioch, in which descriptions of Christ's death alternate with those of him dwelling in the grave and reminiscences of his childhood, resulted in the formation of a new composition, the Anapeson, based on Old Testament texts (Genesis 49, 9; Numbers, 24, 9 and several Psalms). The oldest surviving examples of this representation are preserved in the Protaton and the Omorphi Ecclesia in Athens (from around 1300). This theme was to appear in two Serbian churches related to the Athonite milieu, Chilandar and its metochion, the church of St. Nikita near Skoplje. In both cases this image appears on the front sides of the piers flanking the iconostasis and there are minor differences between the two examples. However, the angels which appear on both frescoes clearly indicate the liturgical nature of this composition, just as the instrumenta martirii in their hands, the gestures of the Virgin and the open eyes of Christ indicate his death, the three days he spent in the grave – in his human hypostasis – and the Virgin lamenting over him. Whatever the location of this image – in the narthex, above the entrance, in the naos or in the altar space – it always denotes Christ whose resurrection is expected. That is why it is associated with the services and rites performed before Easter. The evangelical scene of the Entombment and the liturgical composition of the Anapeson conclude the cycle of Christ's Passion and corporeal death and announce, through the language of visual images, his Resurrection.[103]

The Cycle of the Resurrection Appearances of Christ

As one of the most important events, the Resurrection of Christ was celebrated in a very solemn manner because it also offered to the faithful hope of their own resurrection. The forty day long stay of the resurrected Christ on earth was the last chance for him to instruct the apostles, to "entrust them with the divine ministry of salvation" and promise them consolation for the last time at the Pentecost after which



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Arilje, *Betrayal of Judas*, 1295/1296

he ascended to heaven. Gospel pericopes related to these events were read at mattins from Easter to the Pentecost and they represented the axis around which painters grouped larger of smaller collections of scenes tied to the resurrection appearances of Christ. In churches of the XIII century the resurrection appearances of Christ were painted in the sanctuary, usually reduced to just a few scenes, and the cycle retained this location even in some Serbian churches such as St. Prochor of Pčinja, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, Chilandar and St. Nikita. Still, even in these churches an odd scene would stray out of the sanctuary and be transferred to the diaconicon and the east part of the naos in the same way the opening and the closing scenes were transferred into the altar space in Nagoričino. The cycle became extraordinarily significant in king Milutin's churches, it even assumed the leading position in contemporary Orthodox painting in both the number of scenes and the place they held within the programme of decoration. It first entered the naos in Bogorodica Ljeviška and its ten or so preserved scenes indicate that this church was the model upon which the representations of resurrection lections in Nagoričino and Gračanica were based. There, the sequence of the scenes, based on the texts of all four gospels, relates extensively Christ's appearances before the myrrhophores, the apostles, the events at Emmaus and the See of Galilee. Parts of the gospels read at the services inspired the painters to constantly multiply the number of scenes so that in Nagoričino we find a total of seventeen and approximately as many in Gračanica, Chilandar and St. Nikita.[104]

The extant frescoes offer ground for us to assume that the same redaction of the cycle was used in both Ljeviška, Nagoričino and Gračanica, although the iconography of the scenes is not always identical. What's more, in Chilandar, even their disposition is significantly different: the Holy Women at the Sepulchre appear after a series a paintings related to the Passion lections while Christ's appearances at Emmaus are transferred to the diaconicon. In St. Nikita, the Holy Women at the Sepulchre were also singled out in the naos of the church, the events of Emmaus entirely omitted while the appearances of Christ before the apostles were considerably abridged in both churches. Scenes of Christ's appearance before the three myrrh bearing women from Chilandar and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos could also testify that, outside the circle centred around Michael and Eutychios, other iconographic solutions, faithful to the ancient formulas with Christ in the centre and the women on either side of him, were also employed. In the early XIV century this composition was not going to be represened in that form in any church in Serbia.

On the other hand, centain examples prove that the cycle was not exclusively based on gospel texts and their liturgical implementation. In Nagoričino the first appearance of Christ is painted before the scene showing the three myrrh bearing women at the sepulchre of Christ. Moreover, there are three women: two kneel before Christ wile the third stands in front of them with arms outstretched in supplication. Although no name was inscribed or preserved by this figure, we should recognise in her the Virgin Mary because she wears the traditional violet maphorion decorated with tassels and is the only one of the three with a halo around her head. The group of three myrrh bearing women is not at all an unusual phenomenon, although it appears in Byzantine art only from the XII century on, certainly under the influence of the text of Gospel of Mark (16, 1–8) read at liturgy during the Week of the Myrrh Bearers. In Vatopedi (1313) and Gračanica, the myrrh bearers are joined by the Virgin and, in the latter church, her name is preserved by one of the figures while being referred to, in the accompanying inscription, as the "other Mary". After all, the services of the Saturday before Easter mention in several instances the Virgin's arrival, together with the myrrh bearers, to the sepulchre of Christ.[105] Disregarding the standard order, the painters of Nagoričino substituted the Virgin's visit to Christ's tomb with a representation of Christ appearing before the Virgin and two myrrh bearing women so that the Holy Women at the Sepulchre found its place right after this composition. It seems that the chronological order of events was observed only in Bogorodica Ljeviška since, similar to Gračanica, the three myrrh bearers are depicted after the scene of the Holy Women at the Sepulchre. As attested by the preserved frescoes of Nagoričino, Gračanica and Chilandar, at the beginning of the XIV century this scene was based on the Gospel of John (20, 12) and thus included representations of two angels flanking the sarcophagus, a novelty in comparison with earlier art.

The further order of the scenes was standard, with the myrrh bearing women informing the apostles of Christ's resurrection, Peter and John discovering Christ's empty tomb and Christ appearing to Luke and Cleopas in Emmaus. In an iconographic sense they were almost identical in all churches and only occasionally they relied on older models. In Bogorodica Ljeviška, and somewhat earlier in the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid and the Protaton, in the Road to Emmaus and the Supper at Emmaus Christ is repre-



77
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Supper at Emmaus*, detail, 1309–1313



78
Staro Nagoričino, *Christ appearing to the apostles on the See of Galilee*, detail: *the apostles setting off to the fish hunt*, 1315–1317

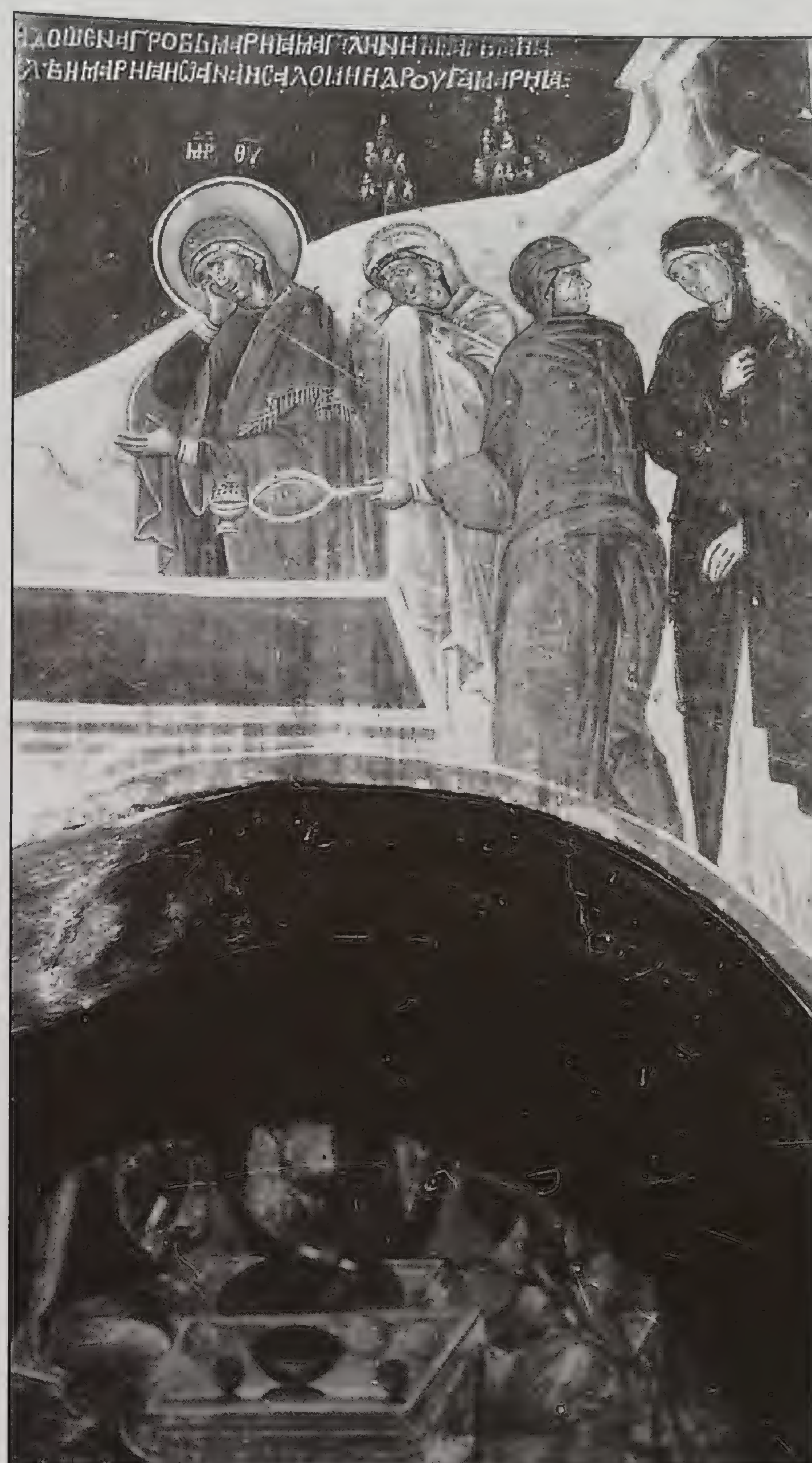
sented "in another form" (Mark 16, 12), in a dark red dress with gold bands and a tonsure, in the guise of a priest offering bread to the apostles. The liturgical nature of the scene is even more obvious in Chilandar because it is located in the diaconicon apse, right next to the Vision of Peter of Alexandria and the Celebration of Holy Liturgy. Such a connotation of the Supper at Emmaus was well known to the painters working in Chilandar because this scene had already been located in that spot a while earlier in the Protaton while in the Virgin Peribleptos Michael and Eutychios found a place for it next to the apse of the prothesis.[106]

In Gračanica and Chilandar, Christ's appearance to the apostles on the Sea of Galilee was depicted in an abridged form, quite contrary to Bogorodica Ljeviška and Nagoričino. In this last church representations of other events recounted in the Gospel of John have also been preserved: the apostles setting off to the fish hunt, Christ addressing the apostles from the shore, Peter jumping into the water, the burning fire with a fish and some bread upon it, the drawing of the net full of fish and Christ blessing the bread and the fish. In Ljeviška and Nagoričino, apart from the similar order of the episodes, attention was focused on the blessing of the fish and the bread and their distribution to the apostles as an allusion to the distribution of eucharistic offerings by Christ in the Communion. In Gračanica and St. Nikita this detail was left out because this scene, following the text of the Gospel of Luke (24, 42–43), depicted only the apostles offering honey and fish to Christ, based on an iconographic scheme which drew it quite close to the distribution of the eucharistic offerings to the apostles.[107]

In Serbian churches considerable attention was devoted to Christ's appearances to the apostles on Zion, marked with a basilical structure in the background, an allusion to the building later raised on that site. It is in front of this edifice that the apostle Thomas is assured about the identity of the risen Christ on the frescoes of Žiča, Nagoričino, Gračanica and St. Nikita, and in front of it that Christ himself appears on the paintings from Nagoričino and Gračanica. Among these scenes, Christ's appearance behind closed doors, or the Mission of the Apostles, was of particular significance. In Žiča this fresco has been destroyed while in Gračanica it shows Christ in the centre of the composition, addressing his disciples with his hand raised (John 20, 19–23) and introducing them to the noble mission of spreading his teachings. Should we base our conclusions on the repainted Chilandar fresco, an unusual Mission of the Apostles was depicted in the apse of that church: under the ciborium, on the altar table, there are rolled up scrolls and some of the apostles are either reaching for them or stretching their arms towards Christ surrounded by the rest of the apostles who bow before him. This part of the scene actually repeats the Mission of the Apostles according to Matthew (28, 16–20): upon seeing Christ on the Mount of Galilee before his ascension, the disciples bowed before him and he addressed them with the words: "All power in heaven and on earth hath been given me. Go ye, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and behold, I am with you all days, unto the consummation of the world". The iconography of this passage was not subjected to many changes and rendered Christ blessing the two groups of apostles bowing deeply before him with both his hands; only in Palaiologan art was this formula altered into showing all the apostles on just one side of Christ. The scene from Chilandar is based on that of the Protaton and the same scheme was adopted also by the painters of Nagoričino and probably those of Gračanica. In Chilandar and Nagoričino, Christ's gestures illustrate his words about power in heaven and on earth. Although the left part of the Chilandar fresco has no counterparts in the art of its era it can still be explained by the words with which Christ sent off his disciples to spread his teachings to all the nations. In one of the earliest examples of this subject, a miniature from the Paris. gr. 510 manuscript, fol. 426v, dating from 879, a group of twelve apostles baptizing the people are depicted below a figure of Christ surrounded by his disciples. On the other hand, in Timotesubani, a Georgian church of the early XIII century, emphasis was placed on "the teaching of all nations": those exact words from the Gospel of Matthew were written out on Christ's open book while he himself is surrounded by figures of the apostles holding rolled up scrolls. In Chilandar we see the apostles picking up the rolled up scrolls which they repeatedly hold when depicted as single figures. In medieval art scrolls, whether rolled up or open, either represent the doctrine which is being spread or appear as a sign of the chosen ones. Neither the composition from Timotesubani nor that from Chilandar were illustrations but rather symbolic images of the Mission of the Apostles. Certain iconographic ties between this Chilandar fresco and the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles can not be ruled out because this composition sometimes includes a personification of the Cosmos with scrolls. It was also the first compo-







79
Staro Nagoričino, *Christ talking to Peter after the third resurrection appearance*, 1315–1317

80
Staro Nagoričino, *Resurrected Christ and the Virgin*, 1315–1317

81
Gračanica, *The Virgin and the myrrhophores at the sepulchre*, 1319–1321

sition in which the apostles were depicted holding scrolls in their hands as a symbol of the mission to which they were directed by Christ and the authority which they received through the power of the Holy Ghost. Placed between the Communion of the Apostles and the Celebration of Holy Liturgy, in Chilandar this fresco acquired its full liturgical justification.[108]

Liturgical Subjects in the Sanctuary

More than ever before, liturgy imbued the programmes of fresco decoration of Serbian churches of king Milutin's era resulting in considerable changes

in the iconography of particular scenes and even complete cycles which were entirely synchronised with the new nature of late Byzantine art. Subjects of a liturgical nature, in a more narrow sense of the word, were especially numerous in the altar space, a space in which most of the services were performed, and whose walls were decorated with especially chosen gospel scene. The altar table had long been ascribed the symbolism of the Bethlehem manger, the sepulchre of the Lord and the table at which the Last Supper was held on Zion, so that in Arilje, St. Prochor of Pčinja, Sušica, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos and Sts. Peter and Paul on the Lim the walls of the altar space were, accordingly, decorated with scenes of the Nativity and Descent into Hades. At times (in Nagoričino and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos) this space could also host a larger number of scenes based on Passion lections, under the condition that they referred to Christ's last supper with the apostles (scenes from the opening of the cycle) and his burial (scenes from its end). It could also hold representations related to the Resurrection lections, as in St. Prochor of Pčinja, Nagoričino, St. Nikita and Chilandar.

Thus, the decoration of the altar space summed up an entire circle of liturgical themes, beginning with the Incarnation of Christ, through his Passion and death to his Resurrection and Ascension. In art, all the major themes were already formulated before the early XIV century so that, at that time, they were only subjected to minor iconographic changes. The Virgin in the apex of the apse was still an indispensable part of the decoration and, regardless of her type (in Studenica, Nagoričino and Sts. Peter and Paul she sits on a throne, in Chilandar, Gračanica, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos she is signed as Acheiropoiitos, in Sušica she is surrounded by angels), she is always the image of the Church on Earth, an epithet she attained by giving birth to Christ.

The Eucharist, the most significant part of every liturgy, also appears in the apse. In practically all of king Milutin's churches it takes the form of the Communion of the Apostles. In cases where there was not enough space for this scene in the apse, as in St. Prochor of Pčinja, Bogorodica Ljeviška and Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, it appears on the lateral walls flanking it. As a liturgical aspect of the Last Supper, the Communion of the Apostles was always related to that scene in one way or another. In Gračanica, Chilandar and St. Nikita, as in the art of the XII century, Christ is approached from both sides by a group of twelve apostles, St. Peter leading the way on either side. The division of the twelve disciples into two groups, as was most often the case in Serbian monuments, resulted in indecision regarding the choice of the apostle who was to head the group on the right and thus receive the wine from Christ's hands. That role was usually assigned to apostle John. However, Judas, the only figure without a halo, appears in his place in Arilje and this choice was probably based on the text of the Gospel of John (13, 26). In Bogorodica Ljeviška, on the other hand, John is substituted by Paul, thus disregarding the "historical" aspect of the composition and underlining even more its symbolic meaning. That, together with the angels bearing rhypidia and dressed as deacons, goes to underline the role of Christ as the archpriest and draws this composition closer to the communion of the priests, a rite performed by the bishop. Probably as a result of direct influences of the liturgy, the words with which Christ addresses the apostles while offering them the bread and the wine (Matthew 26, 26–29) found their way into this scene, together with the image of Christ the Great Archpriest wearing a sakkos, as in Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos and St. Nikita. Having established the new Pasch, Chist became a priest of the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 109, 4; Hebrews 5, 10; 7, 17–21), his priesthood is eternal and it can redeem those who reach God through it (Hebrews 7, 24–25). The divine nature of the rite performed by Christ and the offerings which he distributes is attested not only by his ecclesiastic symbols and the presence of the angel-deacons but also by the cherubims painted in the vicinity of this scene in Bogorodica Ljeviška and Gračanica, later, in Dečani (1338–1348), to be included in the very kernel of the composition.[109]

Regardless of its "historical" or "liturgical" overtones, the Communion of the Apostles also had a certain realism – in the medieval sense of the word – because the role of Christ in establishing the Eucharist has remained unchanged to this day. During the first decades of the XIV century the image of establishment and perseverance of the Eucharist, first rendered in the XI century in the form of the Communion of the Apostles and the Celebration of Holy Liturgy, depicted one above the other, was a regular feature of programmes of decoration. In the different churches in which it appeared minor changes could be introduced to this fundamentally unalterable image but they did not affect its basic meaning. The unusual Mission of the Apostles from Chilandar, located between the Communion of the Apostles and the Celebration of Holy Liturgy, only emphasises the connection between these scenes: the apostles were the first to receive this great sacrament from Christ, as he ordered "This do



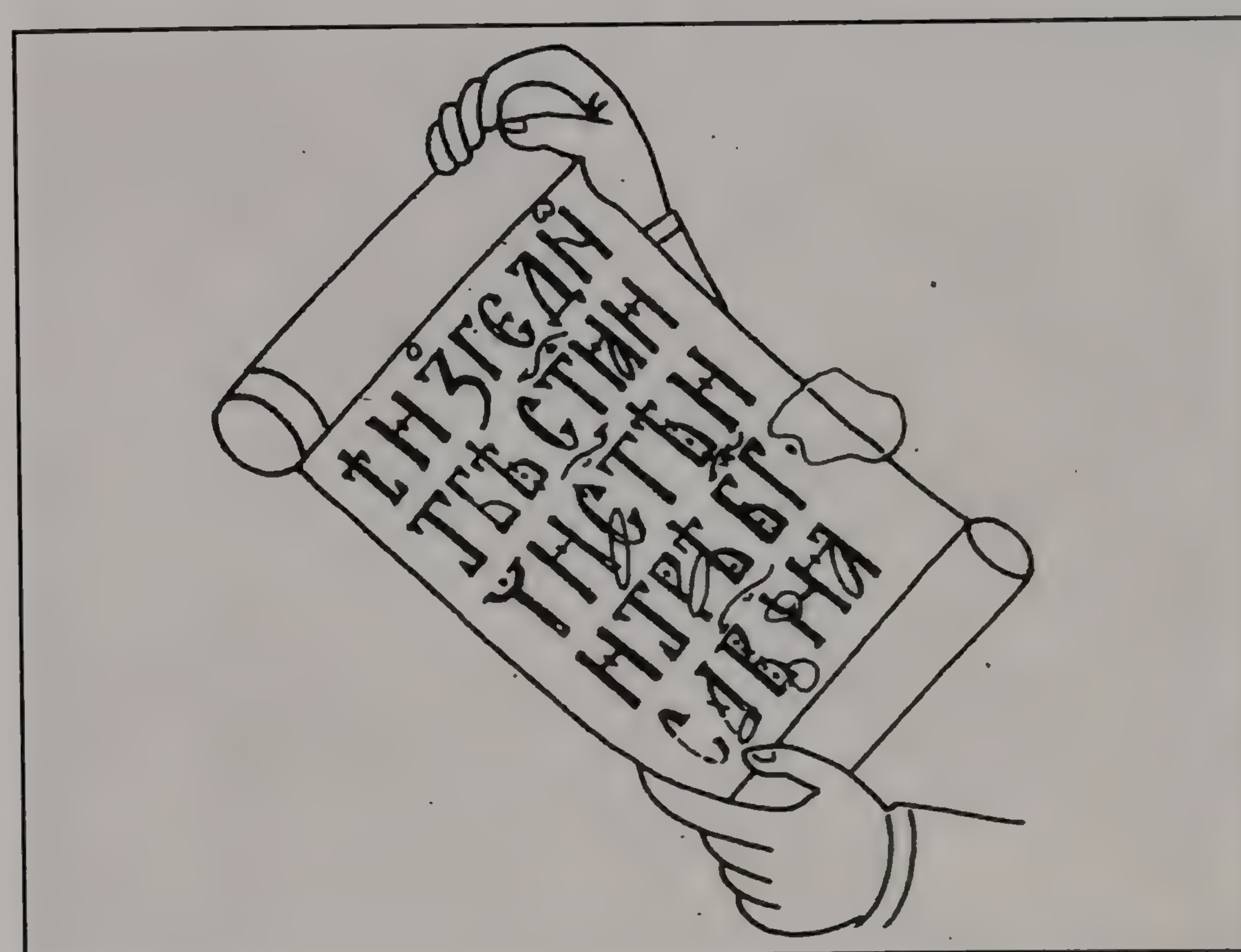
82
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Frescoes in the apse*, 1318–1319

ye in remembrance of me" (Luke 22, 19), "for as often as ye eat this bread and drink of the cup, ye proclaim the death of the Lord, until he come" (I Corinthians 11, 24–26), and they passed it on to their disciples and future priests. For those reasons the scene of Celebration of Holy Liturgy included a great number of bishops from various periods of time (most often the participants of the First Ecumenical Council) and different parts of the Christian world, among them some who were rarely portrayed: in Arilje – St. Achilleios, in Chilandar – St. Sava the Serbian, St. Amphilochios, St. Epiphanios of Cyprus and St. Andrew of Crete, the last two also appear in St. Nikita, together with St. Nicephoros of Constantinople and Eustathios of Thessaloniki, in Studenica – St. Dionysios the Areopagite, in Gračanica – St. Elias of Antioch and St. Germanos of Constantinople and in Nagoričino – St. Clement of Ohrid and St. Constantine Kabasilas. Dressed in the same robes, polystavria, omophores and bearing other episcopal signs, positioned in the same stance and displaying the same liturgical text, they were the image of the one and unchangeable liturgy which precludes all idiosyncrasies. However, resemblance of or even total correspondence with the everyday rite performed around the holy offerings could not and would not be avoided, only in certain cases it was more conspicuous than in others. It seems that in Ljeviška and Gračanica we can actually identify the part of the liturgy rendered in painting. There are no open and inscribed scrolls in the hands of the first bishops who are, rather, shown in the act of benediction of the Amnos on the table, a rite tied to the Anaphora when, following a commemoration of the Last Supper, the priest silently prays with his head bowed and then blesses the holy offerings with the sign of a cross, just as we see the bishops doing in these two churches. In Bogorodica Ljeviška and Gračanica, apart from the Amnos and the chalice, a scroll or a book is also depicted on the altar table, probably as a sign of Christ's words and commandments regarding the Eucharist. The essence of this image is best expressed in Studenica where Amnos is singled out in a special niche and depicted, next to a chalice, on an altar table surrounded by two deacon angels holding rhypidia while the scene is accompanied by an inscription the text of which is taken from the Proskomide rite: "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world is slain for the life and salvation of the world".[110]

There were also other ways of visualising Christ's death on the cross and his redeeming sacrifice, not only through narrative representations (the Last Supper, Descent from the Cross and Entombment) or liturgical compositions but also through leaved crosses as, for example, on the back of the iconostasis in Nagoričino and the niches in the south wall of the altar space in Petrova crkva, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos and elsewhere. The words or cryptograms written out around them point out that this is the very cross of the sacrificed Jesus Christ, Son of God, which Helen had discovered at the Golgotha.[111]

Liturgical themes, usually reduced only to the Virgin and the Celebration of Holy Liturgy with just a few bishops, could also be located in the protheses and, at times, even the diaconicons of churches as well as in the altar spaces of the parekklesia. As in Gračanica and Nagoričino, the choice of characters was a matter of great attention because they had to differ from those depicted in the main apse while the image of the Virgin had to be of a different type. Sometimes this resulted in the appearance of more liberal solutions which, nonetheless, remained in touch with liturgical connotations and the symbolism of the space in which they were painted. Thus, in the apses of such spatial units we find St. John the Prodromos as the last prophet of Christ's sacrifice. In the apse of the diaconicon of the katholikon of Chilandar, probably following the slightly earlier example of the Protaton, we find the Supper at Emmaus and, beneath it, the Vision of St. Peter of Alexandria. This last scene appears also in the vicinity of the prothesis apse in St. Nikita and the south chapel of Gračanica. Finally, in the apse of the katholikon of Chilandar, as well as in the apse of St. Nikita which was probably modelled after it, we find that, on the east wall, the Eucharist is replaced with the Hospitality of Abraham, its Old Testament archetype. In fact, in Chilandar, there is actually a miniature cycle of the righteous Abraham of which only the three angels at the table, signed as the Holy Trinity, were designated for the apse (the same solution appears in St. Nikita) because it is to the Trinity that offerings and prayers of gratitude are extended at the liturgy. A cycle of scenes related to the righteous Abraham is also found in Gračanica and there, too, risking a disturbance of the chronological order of the compositions, the Hospitality of Abraham, i.e. the Holy Trinity, is painted right next to the apse.

Gračanica stands out among king Milutin's churches because of the unusual wealth of themes depicted in its sanctuary, extraordinary in both choice and meaning. Gospel themes are excluded from the programme (except for the Ascension which is represented, according to ancient tradition, on the vault) and in



83
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Celebration of Holy Liturgy*, 1309–1313

84
Prizren, Bogorodica Ljeviška, *Celebration of Holy Liturgy*, detail, 1309–1313



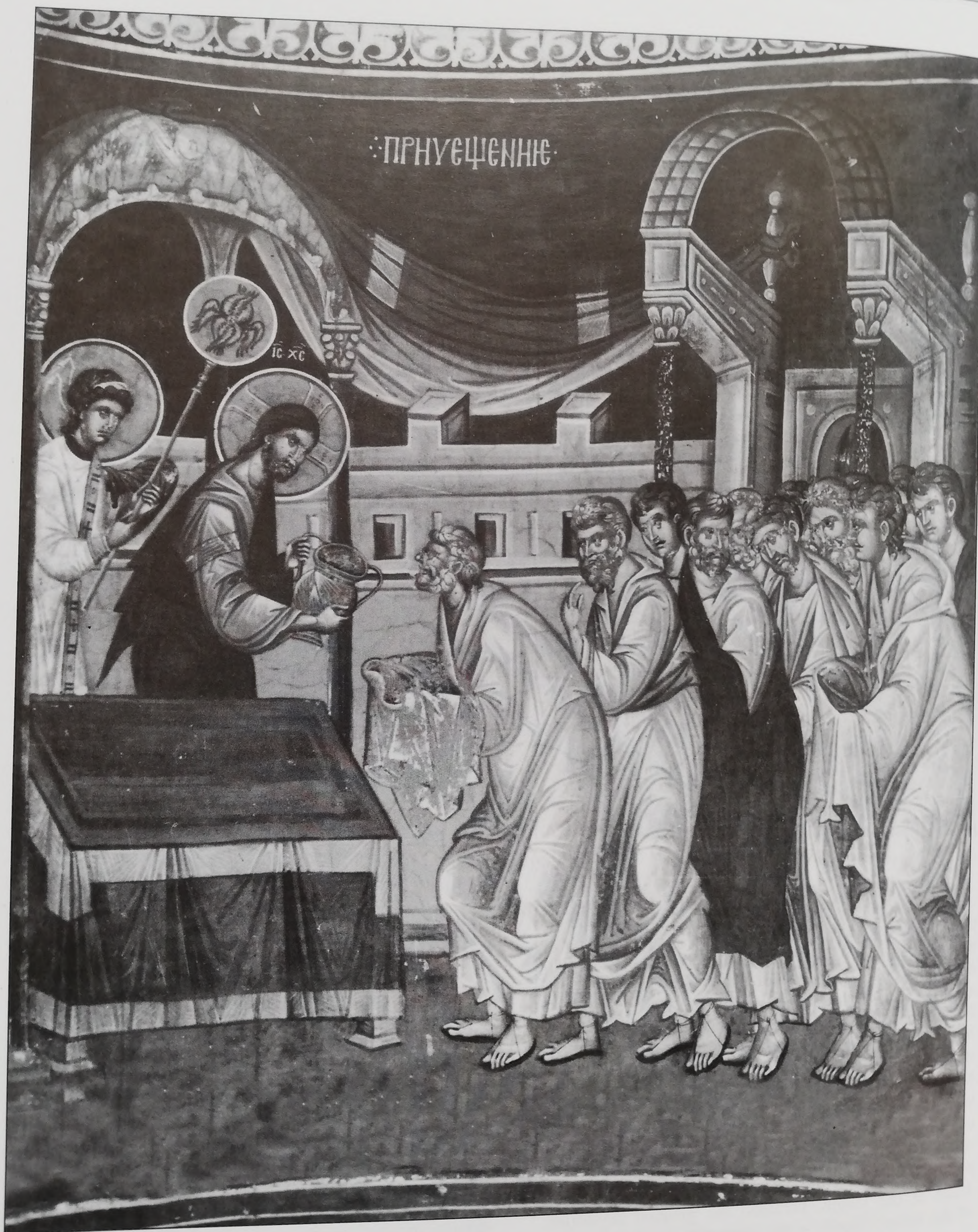
85
Studenica, Kraljeva crkva, *Celebration of Holy Liturgy*, detail, 1318–1319

86
Thessaloniki, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos, *St. Nicholas*, 1315–1320

87
Arilje, *Communion with Wine*, detail, 1295/1296



their place we find a cycle dedicated to the Virgin and a number of Old Testament scenes. Their mutual connection is obvious and their disposition in the altar space is not unusual either. In Gračanica, the celebration of the Virgin reached its apogee – her role in the Incarnation of Christ is rendered in a majestic way in the altar while events related to her death and her role as mediatrix appear in the naos. The miraculous birth and youth of the God chosen Virgin are conceived as a part of Divine Providence realised long before the birth of Christ. Many Old Testament events, the subject of lections related to the various feasts of the Virgin, heralded the greatest mysteries of the future Church – the immaculate conception of Christ and his Incarnation which turned the Virgin into a New Temple, a throne of the Lord, a New Tabernacle, those being the poetic epithets often ascribed to her. Words uttered during liturgy and transposed into visual images celebrated the Virgin by comparing her with the Fleece of Gideon (Judges 6, 36–38; Psalm 71, 6) and the furnace from which the three Hebrew youths escaped unharmed (Daniel 3, 1–30), with the burning bush (Exodus 3, 2–8), the Old Testament Tabernacle (Exodus 26–28) and the Temple of Divine Wisdom (Proverbs 9, 1–18). Used only sporadically in earlier art, and even in the decoration of some of Milutin's churches (Chilandar, St. Nikita, Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos), these archetypes



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Gračanica, *Communion with Wine*, 1319–1321

of the Virgin were all grouped together in Gračanica. Moreover, in this church they were imbued with other connotations as well.[112]

The Image of the New Temple

In the Middle Ages, the connection, in an ideal sense, of course, between the two Temples, the Old which existed before Christ and the New which he himself established, was a favourite topic of contemplation focused on the relation of the two Testaments within the framework of the history of redemption. Finally, during the late Byzantine period this idea was articulately expressed even in the visual arts. Imagery of this sort also marked the art of king Milutin's era through the emergence of themes discussed above as well as images which served to emphasise this particular relation. The idea of an eternal existence of the Lord's dwelling, or Temple, on earth, which was fundamentally transformed by Christ, was expressed through the use of ancient, well known images, their choice and particular disposition in the different programmes of decoration. The Old Testament altars from which the Lord received the offerings extended to Him were seen as archetypes, albeit imperfect, of the New Temple. As a result of the process of historiation of Old Testament truths in late medieval painting – performed in a manner identical to that observed in contemporary literature, liturgy and its commentaries – they often appeared on church walls. Because the Christian Temple is founded upon the incarnated and sacrificed Christ and because it was the continuation of the old sacrificial altars, the Tabernacle and the temples, imagery of this nature could be found in any part of a church but it was mostly concentrated in the sanctuary.

The nature of the extensive story of Abraham's sacrifice painted on the east wall of the narthex of Arilje, directly above the entrance to the naos, is mostly didactic. This scene is often found on this location and its didactic character is typical of entrance spaces but at the same time it also suggests an image of the old altar upon which Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son for the love of God and over which he spoke with the Lord through the angels. Such a connotation of this Arilje fresco is further attested by the fact that the same scene appears also in the sanctuary of Gračanica. The same meaning is discerned also in the two Old Testament scenes related to the righteous Jacob which appear in the exonarthex of Bogorodica Ljeviška. Not only are they related to the Virgin and Israel, the chosen people, descended from Jacob (for those reasons these two compositions appear below the Tree of Jesse), but they are also the image of Jacob's contact (again trough the angels) and conversation with the Lord. Jacob named the place where he wrestled with the angel Penuel, for it was there that he saw God and that his soul was saved (Genesis 32, 30). Having seen the heavenly ladder, Jacob cried out in fear: "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28, 17) and then raised an altar on that spot. There could be no better picture for an entrance to a new, Christian temple, for this was its archetype. At that time, the same scenes also appeared on the pendentives of the south-west dome over the narthex of the Chilandar katholikon, next to the Fleece of Gideon and the Announcing of Samson's Birth, also in reference to the New Temple. The same meaning was present in other frescoes, too, those around the entrance to the naos of the Chilandar church for example. With the exception of one Old Testament theme, Wisdom Hath Builded Her House, related to both the ktetor and New Temple imagery, the place of honour was assigned to the representation of Christ Emmanuel surrounded by prophets, on the vault, as well as to the Virgin with Child, painted above the entrance, and the Crucifixion – all images of the incarnated Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, the key events in the founding of the New Church on Earth. On the other hand, the north part of the wall is taken up by a scene depicting the Prayer of St. John Chrysostomos, as seen by deacon Proclus, the future patriarch of Constantinople.[113]

Most often and most naturally, Old Testament images imbued with messages of the temple or sanctuary in general and New Testament images of the New Church, supplemented with liturgical themes, appeared side by side in the altar space, both as a parallel between the two sanctuaries and a contrast between the imperfect and the perfect sacrifice offered to the Lord. In Chilandar and St. Nikita, a representation of the Old Testament Trinity, i.e. the Hospitality of Abraham, was placed inside the prothesis, a space in which the Proskomide rite was performed and the holy offerings sanctified. In Chilandar, moreover, this scene is supplemented by a prologue showing Abraham welcoming the three angels. While the Welcoming is an archetype of entering the altar, the Hospitality is an ancient announcement of the Eucharist offering extended to the Holy Trinity and, in St. Nikita and Gračanica, in the corresponding fresco inscription on the wall, this scene is actually identified with that

name. All in all, Gračanica sums up the efforts of generations of early XIV century theologians and painters aimed at employing Old Testament images in the process of historiation of New Temple imagery. There, in Gračanica, in a church dedicated to the Virgin, ideas of both temples, and their mutual connection through the person of Mary, constantly intertwine. Those Old Testament images, although not all in the same measure, refer also to the Eucharist performed in the altar space. Through his Ministry on earth, and especially through his Sacrifice on the cross, Christ established the New Church. In Gračanica, the primordial sojourn of God among men and the services and sacrifices offered to him, commemorated in words and rites at the liturgy, are memorialised through visual images. Along with the Fleece of Gideon, other Old Testament scenes were also painted in the altar space of Gračanica as archetypes of Old Testament services and the New Temple. The Old Testament Tabernacle with Moses and Aaron officiating in it is painted on the north wall and the meaning of this image is clear enough because the apostle Paul (Hebrews 8–9) already pointed out that Christ himself came to earth and created a new tabernacle which exceeded the old in all respects. In medieval art Abraham's Sacrifice was also an archetype of the sacrifice of Christ and in Gračanica it appears on the south wall of the altar space. Iconographically different from the one in Arilje, here, too, it was an image of the old sacrificial altar, with all the elements of comparison between Isaac and Christ well known to contemporary liturgy. Next to it we find a scene showing the patriarch Abraham (identified through the inscription) inviting the three angels to his home. Closest to the apse, in the same zone as the Communion of the Apostles, are two Old Testament prefigurations of the New Temple and the Eucharist: the Hospitality of Abraham and Wisdom Hath Builded Her House.The first scene shows the three angels, Abraham and Sarah and the other a personification of Divine Wisdom seated at a table with a scroll half unrolled and writing tools in front of it, a building with seven pillars in the background and two maidens with shallow vessels on either side of this structure. As a result of their location, both scenes are related to the Communion, both as its archetypes and heralds of the perfect sacrifice and the perfect Temple which Christ founded on earth.[114]

The combination of Mariological symbolism and that of the New Church in such Old Testament images was based on liturgical and literary texts which exalted the Virgin as the Temple on Earth. Two of king Milutin's churches, those in Gračanica and Studenica, best exemplify how clear and significant such ideas must have been to the educated advisors of the painters, the likes of bishop Ignjatije of Lipljan and Jovan, the hegoumenos of Studenica, for example. Both churches contain cycles of the Virgin's childhood and youth, with scenes seen many times before in both earlier and contemporary art in identical or similar iconographic solutions. In Gračanica, however, the entire cycle is located within the altar space and its scenes are distributed in such a manner that those related to the events which took place in the Temple appear by the apse and on the south wall: Joachim's Offerings Rejected, Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, Zachary Praying Before the Rods of the Suitors, Mary Given Away to Joseph and Water of Purification. The Temple of Jerusalem is always marked by the presence of a high priest, a ciborium and tabernacle doors. Once again emphasis was placed on images of the Old and the New Temple and, what's more, precisely in those scenes whom are related to the Virgin because she was the one through whom the link between them was realised. It was probably for the same reasons that scenes from the cycle of the Virgin which are tied to the Temple, Joachim's Offerings Rejected, Mary Given to Joseph and Water of Purification, found their way to the altar space of the church in Studenica.[115]

At about the same time an unusual group of images appeared, based on evangelical events rather than on Old Testament archetypes, which were related to the founding of the Church on Earth. The unique nature of the fresco decoration of Žiča, singular in its time, seems to be the result of repainting of the older disposition and choice of subjects, formulated in the days of St. Sava, undertaken in king Milutin's time. The fact that they are similar to the wall paintings from Peć, from around 1265, only confirms this assumption. In Žiča, the Annunciation to Zachary and the Annunciation to the Virgin were chosen as examples of the Old Temple and its subsequent replacement by the New Temple while the founding of the New Temple was represented through events related to Zion and its cenacle: the Last Supper, the Incredulity of Thomas, the Mission of the Apostles and the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. These are all images of events which are traditionally associated with Zion and which, beyond any doubt, were well known to St. Sava. Such a choice of scenes was conditioned by the fact that, at the time it was first decorated with wall paintings, Žiča was already a cathedral church and was to remain in that function at



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Gračanica, *Frescoes in the altar space*, 1319–1321

the beginning of the XIV century when its frescoes were being restored. The idea of a link between the original church established by Christ on Zion (and, through it, the Old Testament Temple) and the young Serbian autocephalous church (since 1219) impelled St. Sava to place special emphasis in Žiča on the events which were important for the founding of the Church on Earth, namely the events which took place on Zion. It was there that Christ had his Passover supper with his disciples and established the sacrament of the Eucharist, the sacrament of a mystic union between man and God, there that he performed his archpriest's prayer (John 17, 1–26) and set up the apostles as his followers. On Zion he appeared before